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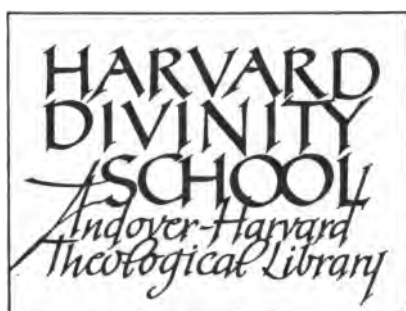
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CHRIST, THE SPIRIT:

BEING

AN ATTEMPT TO STATE THE

Primitive View of Christianity.

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the Flesh profiteth nothing."

JOHN vi: 28.

"The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

2 COR. 3: 6.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"REMARKS ON ALCHEMY AND THE ALCHEMISTS;" AND "SWEDENBORG A HERMETIC
PHILOSOPHER."

Eliza W. Hitchcock

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The eye by long use comes to see even in the darkest corner; and there is no subject so obscure, but we may discern some glimpse of truth by long poring on it. Truth is the cry of all, but the game of a few. Certainly where it is the chief passion, it doth not give way to vulgar cares and views; nor is it contented with a little ardor in the early time of life, active perhaps to pursue, but not so fit to weigh and revise. He that would make a real progress in knowledge, must dedicate his age as well as youth, the later growth as well as first fruits, at the altar of Truth.

(From a Hermetic Volume.)

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INTRODUCTION.

THE writer of the following pages has not ventured upon holy ground without having reverentially, as he trusts, put off his shoes and uncovered his head.

It is said that whosoever has a truth, owes it to humanity to "cast it on the waters;" and, if this is so, then, those who even think they have a truth may venture to suggest it for the consideration of others. This last is the position of the writer. He thinks he has a glimpse, and something more than a glimpse, of a truth in connection with the sacred volume, and desires to give some circulation to it; but he does so in no spirit of arrogance. He would especially invite attention to it from those who may have found it difficult to understand the miracles recorded in both the Old and New Testaments.

In endeavoring to look into the Scriptures with a rational eye, it will appear to many, no doubt, as it ever has so appeared, that the sacred volume is degraded and brought down, as the phrase is, to the level of human reason. But let this point be examined.

We cannot think too exaltedly or with too much awe of God. But are we not in danger of lowering our idea of the Supreme Being by attributing to his agency, in a supernatural sense, a work existing in such a form as manifestly subjects it to the accidents of time, and which must pass through the hands of various uninspired translators, before it can possibly reach the eyes of men in different countries and ages of the world? We should be careful, I say, lest, in exalting the Scriptures over much, we degrade our conceptions of God; for there may be an error on this side as well as on the other.

We had better confess at once that no mere writing can be divine, except in a qualified sense; but in such a sense I am as ready as any one to regard the Scriptures as divine. They were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by a holy spirit of truth. But when I am told to look upon them as absolutely supernatural, I am repelled from them, and am in danger of losing the benefits I might otherwise derive from them. Upon this consideration I have determined to offer my brethren in the "body," which is "the temple of the Holy Ghost," (1 Cor. 6 : 19,) certain views which have served myself as a key by which, as I believe, a well-disposed student may be able to enter satisfactorily into at least the vestibule,

or outer courts, of the most wonderful volume in the world, and the most difficult to understand.

I would ask, with as much earnestness as may not compromise a reasonable degree of diffidence, that the suggestions in the following pages may receive the attention of those who feel that they do not well know what to make of the miraculous portions of the Scriptures; not, indeed, as a final solution of the multitude of problems that may arise on a perusal of the sacred volume, but as furnishing some clue to a method of study by which, with patience and the Divine blessing, some valuable results may be obtained.

If a neighbor of mine speaks to me, I understand him, if I understand him at all, by means of some principles in common between us. We stand together in the same nature, and are involved together in the same universal principles, however diversified in their operations; and we have a common life between us. If I am written to from a distance, I understand the writing, if I understand it at all, upon similar principles. If a writing comes to me, not merely from a geographical distance, but from a more or less remote antiquity, still, if I am to understand the writing, it must be upon similar principles. In proportion as the distance increases in time and space through which

a writing comes to me, it may be necessary to take into consideration a greater variety of circumstances, in searching for the sense of the writer; but still, if I am to understand the writing at all, I repeat, that it must be upon some principles common to the writer and myself. I may have to read the writing in a translation, and must then make allowances for this, and I must have regard to the peculiarities of the position of the writer, his connection with others, the state of society in which he wrote, &c., &c.; but after making all of these admissions, I still feel that I can make no progress at all in understanding the writing, if I assume so great a difference between the writer and myself as makes us of *diverse* natures.

Now, I believe with St. Paul, that "all nations of men are of one blood," that is, of one nature; and I am persuaded that there is something in every man which is common to the whole human race, admitting, nevertheless, of endless diversities as to particulars. All men "are nearer to each other by nature," than they can be "separated from each other by circumstances;" we are one by nature, and are divided by accident only.

Upon these principles I endeavor to understand Homer. He wrote under limitations which limit all mankind. He had no power to pass out of the order

of Providence, whose laws extend equally, however variedly, to the whole human race. Upon this assumption, if it be one, I look into Homer, and immediately deny an actual reality to the great epic of the Greek poet. There may have been a Troy which the Greeks destroyed, but there was no such Troy as Homer describes, with its atmosphere filled with gods, counselling and fighting as we read.

How, then, are we to understand Homer? Certainly the Homeric gods are not persons, but personifications; and [why may not courage be personified, and its achievements signalized under the name of Mars, the god of war? And, for poetic purposes, why may not the earth be called Ceres, and the sea Neptune? For, to a poetic genius, nature lives: she is not dead.

For many ages the most civilized portion of the world regarded the poems of Homer as divine, a sublime tribute to his superlative genius; but no one now sees anything especially divine in Homer: yet, after denying a historical reality to the *Iliad*, scholars discover, as they tell us, imperishable beauties in the great epic.

It is an instructive fact that the most enduring beauties of Homer do not in the least depend upon there having been such a place as Troy; and who can

deny but that a great and important sense may be discovered in other works, coming from a remote antiquity, and enclosing marvellous and seemingly impossible narrations, by admitting that the mere writing need not be taken literally.

Now, I would endeavor to understand Moses precisely as I would understand, or would try to understand, Homer, making all proper and necessary distinctions of race, condition and subject, being careful always never to overstep the modesty of nature.

In the following work the author has not desired to present anything new, but rather to revive something very old. He is very much of the opinion of the preacher, that there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, behold this is new? It hath been already of old time which was before us.

On the point of originality, therefore, the author concedes everything, and grants that he has freely used whatever has fallen in his way that promised to answer his purpose, feeling responsible only for this purpose; and, for the most part, he has used his materials without referring to authorities, except when necessary to sustain a statement depending upon authority; for, indeed, and upon his subject especially,

it might be very difficult to credit a single thought to its right parentage. An opinion expressed to-day in England, may be claimed for some German within a hundred years past, and then, re-asserted for an Englishman a hundred years still earlier. Few are aware of the extent of this who have not taken some pains to examine the matter. Within the last few years, much has been said of German philosophy, and the Germans have the credit with many of having discovered and set forth a distinction between subject and object, subjective and objective knowledge, reason and understanding, as if nothing of this kind had ever been thought of before. Yet, in 1682, Jos. Glanville published a small work of only thirty pages—English good sense putting much in a small compass—entitled a DISCOURSE OF TRUTH, written by the Rev. Dr. Rust, who never saw it himself in print. In the first *section* of this work the proposition to be discussed is stated in these words, “*Truth is two-fold ; in the OBJECT and in the SUBJECT ;*” and, besides the first *section*, much of the whole work is devoted to the proof of this distinction.

The Rev. Dr. Rust affirms the unchangeable order of Providence, under a somewhat antiquated expression—the *mutual respects and relations of things ;* and the subject of *section viii* is to show “that the

denial of the mutual respects and relations of things unto one another to be eternal and unchangeable, despoils God of the universal RECTITUDE of his NATURE."

An Essay much like this Discourse was subsequently published by John Norris, the so-called Platonist; and if any one will enter the field of that species of writing in England in the middle of the seventeenth century, he may be led to think that modern refinements in philosophical speculation have done little else than expand and elaborate principles whose germ may be found there.

The doctrine of *Order*, or Law, in the course of history, has been more or less consciously present in the mind of every philosophical historian from a very early period. Its presence is easily seen in the writings of Thucydides, of Tacitus, and of Polybius, as also in the writings of Strabo the geographer, and in other ancient authors of high repute. Its presence was distinctly recognized by *Vico*, who, in announcing it as a principle, in the seventeenth century, claimed to have inaugurated a NEW SCIENCE. Under the influence of this science *Niebuhr* wrote his Lectures upon the History of Rome, pointing out the fabulous character of many an ancient legend, which had until then been usually received as an integral portion of the

history of the ancient mistress of the world. These Lectures were universally received with approbation in the learned world, and, at first, met with toleration, if not admiration, everywhere. But when it was seen that *Eichorn*, and others, carried the same principle into their studies upon the Mosaic records, where it made sad havoc with many a literal reading, it excited at once a most violent opposition; and the principle employed by *Niebuhr* was then pronounced either false or inapplicable for the interpretation of any part of the sacred writings.

The effect, on the whole, has been to divide modern students into two classes, as usual. One class adheres to the principle and accepts all of its consequences. The other turns away from the principle: and the latter throw themselves upon some—I know not what—other principle, and refuse to listen to any attempts to carry a “carnal” reason into the exposition of the Scriptures—which are to be revered, but are closed against all attempts to understand them from any merely rational point of view. But it is of the very nature of reason to protest against this extreme result. No reasonable man can be made to believe that Romulus and Remus were suckled by a wolf, or that Balaam’s ass ever made use of human speech.

The doctrine of an unchangeable order of Provi-

dence is as old as philosophy. It is remarkably stated by *Plutarch*, in his Essay on the inscription, "*E. I.*" at Delphos, in the course of which *Homer* is curiously cited as authority for the doctrine :

"The art of prophesying (says Plutarch) is a divination concerning the future, from things, that are present and past. For neither is the original of anything without a cause, nor the fore-knowledge of anything without a reason. But since all things, that are done, follow and are connected with those that have been done; and those that shall be done, with those that are done, according to the progress, proceeding from the Beginning to the End; he who knows how to look into the causes of this together, and naturally to connect them one with another, knows also and divines

"What things now are, shall be, or e'er have been."

And, indeed, *Homer* excellently well places first, things that are present; and afterwards, those that are future and past. For the argument, according to the virtue of the connection, is taken from the present; Thus, *If this is, that preceded*; and again, *If this is, that shall be*. For the knowledge of the consequence is, as has been said, a rational thing; but sense gives the anticipation to reason; whence (though it may seem bold to say it) I will not be afraid to make this

assertion: That the tripes (or oracle) of Truth is REASON."

Here are two things referred to by Plutarch—Reason and Sense; and while the first furnishes the law of prediction, the last provides the occasion for its exercise.

Now, the union of these in the soul is said to be a mystical marriage, the possession of which is security for a certain tranquility, which lives in a freedom enjoyed under a recognized law. On the one side, Nature is seen as a blind force; on the other, as a life, perfectly free. That there is a combination of these views, resulting in a beautiful harmony, is the assertion of many so-called mystical philosophers, who seem to speak earnestly of it; while they tell us, at the same time, that their view is incommunicable through the senses. This, in religion, I take to be a species of inspiration which has been felt in all ages. To the sensuous faculties there seem to be diversities of it; because, in referring to it, men have used different sensuous representations of it; but, in fact, it is common ground for true poetry, true philosophy, and true religion. The philosopher alone may sometimes attempt to explain this unity, but he does little else than use words vainly. He talks of it, perhaps, as the immutable; upon which others infer a fatality, which he does

not mean at all. He may speak of infinite freedom, when the inference is made that there is no law, because the freedom is not seen in the law. He may call it the *absolute*, and waste words about it; or he may fall in love with the word *unconditioned*, and imagine it expresses the very thing. But after exhausting words in endeavoring to enunciate the unspeakable—the pious Soul calls it God, and forbids all attempts to represent it by images (Ex. 20: 4)—in some degree violating his own rule by writing about it; but, to escape this contradiction as far as possible, he writes of a *Tabernacle*, or of a *Temple*, made without “the noise of hammer, or ax, or any tool of iron;” and it is left to the pious intuitions of others to interpret the meaning; and it is left, also, to the same intuitions to determine what is meant by entering the Tabernacle *unveiled* to commune with God. Through some similar means the pious Soul must discover what sort of spices, frankincense, &c., Moses was directed to lay up, in the place where “God was to meet him,” (Ex. 30: 36).

We are curiously instructed by the same pious Moses that, by the outward sense we can only see visible nature, and what this is (Ex. 33: 23); and we are told that no man shall see God’s face and live. Hence *John*, referring to this, says beautifully, that the only

begotten son hath *declared* him; though he might have put it in the present tense, if he had pleased.

Here is matter for profound study. Let no man despise it, as he values a peaceful view over nature.

Before closing this preface, already too long, I fear, I must say a few words of infidelity, which is thought to be rife in our age; for it is important that words should be used in a clear and definite sense. Infidelity is a word that expresses something in antithesis to *fidelity*; and by FIDELITY I understand faithfulness, or truthfulness. A faithful man is a true man, or a man of truth. Two men may be equally faithful, and yet have very different beliefs about a multitude of questions; especially historical questions, in relation to which testimony does not admit of the certainty of science. Modern toleration allows great diversities of belief in regard to the Scriptures, without subjecting the followers of different systems of Bible interpretations to the charge of infidelity, or unfaithfulness; but very few are willing to go a step further, and admit that a true faith is faith in fidelity itself; and in this direction, to admit, also, that this may exist independently of all known forms of faith, for it preceded them. Under this definition, a Mahomedan, a Boodhist, a Brahmin, may each be faithful; and a reasonable char-

ity might concede to them a fair share of excellence, from the very absence of a superior light, which may guide others with the less danger of falling.

The only real infidel, therefore, is one who disowns, or denies the virtue of fidelity, and the obligation to be faithful.

It has been long seen that what has been called the infidelity of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was, in fact, a species of protestantism, directed against the narrowness of the church—not a direct hostility to Christianity. It is remarkable that *Collins*, *Toland*, *Chubb*, and others, claimed to be Christians; and *Tindall* used, as the title of his book, an express declaration of Bishop Sherlock, which occurs in the following passage from one of his sermons:

“The religion of the gospel (says the Bishop, certainly very respectable authority), is the true original religion of Reason and Nature. The doctrine of Repentance, with which the gospel set out in the world, had reference to the *Law of Reason and Nature*, against which man had everywhere offended. And since Repentance infers the necessity of a future reformation, and a return to that duty and obedience from which, by transgression, we are fallen, the consequence is manifestly this: that the *Gospel was a Republication of the Law of Nature*, and its precepts

declarative of that Original Religion, which was as old as the Creation."

To understand even the writings of Voltaire on this subject, offensive and narrow as they are, we must substitute for the word RELIGION in his works, whenever this is assailed, the word *Superstition*, and perceive it in the intolerable corruptions of the church, as Voltaire witnessed them, and as they may be now seen in Naples, and some other places. We should recollect that Luther was branded as an infidel in his time, and the Catholic Church still regards him as the arch heretic of his day, a fit companion for the cloven-footed gentleman himself.

The *odium theologicum* has become a well understood expression, which has been very terrible in its day, but has now been considerably shorn of its power, since it is known to have its root in a sensuous view of religion, and with great exactness marks a pharisee and a bigot. Lovers of truth do not hate those who err, but are moved with "compassion" for them.—Matt. 9:36.

There may be those who fail to see the beauties and the perfections of the gospels, from defective moral perceptions, very much as some men have no ear for music, and cannot distinguish an exquisite harmony from a bacchanalian song. There may, also,

be a sense in which the natural man knoweth not the things of God; but those who are most forward to appeal to this doctrine never seem to imagine that they may be the subjects of it; while it is undeniable that a large portion of what is called infidelity in the present age is entirely owing to the presence in the gospels of certain relations, delivered as historical facts, which offend the intellect and not the will.

Now, the intellect is a law both to itself and to the will; that is, a truth seen in the intellect is absolute for itself, and the will has no control over it, as may be seen by this simple example, often used for this purpose—that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. Now this, when seen at all, is seen absolutely, and the will has no power over that perception; and it is the same for all scientific truth. How far the intellect may proceed in entering upon this sort of truth must be an indeterminate question, except for itself; but so far as it sees, it sees absolutely, and no will, good or bad, holy or carnal, has anything to do with it. Hence, if any one recognizes intellectually a permanent order in the course of Providence, the presence, in a seeming history, of that which interrupts or disturbs that order, imposes thereby an obligation upon the will itself to seek some other than a historical sense; and this is the case with some minds in

this scientific age, with regard to the miracles inserted in the gospels as histories. Those relations seem to interrupt the order of Providence, and they strike at the foundation of science, which is built upon an assumption of the permanence of that order. Listen to the most prevalent objections to the gospel, and in almost every case they will be seen to be leveled against what are called miracles.

These objections have made themselves felt so deeply in our time, that many intelligent clergymen have been constrained to assert the principle of an inviolable order of nature; and then assume that God provided for a particular miraculous history at a fore-ordaining period of the world; which, therefore, as they assert, entered into the originally designed order of Providence, and did not contravene it. But this statement affirms, in substance, what it denies in words. It denies miracles in words, and yet provides for them by an assumption in the will of God, which, by this assumption, is poisoned with the very uncertainty which the theory seeks to drive out of nature. It is no relief from the pain of supposing a disorder in nature, to transfer the *idea* of it to God.

Some have sought to explain the miracles upon purely natural principles; but nothing can be more

hopeless than such a task, at which *Paulus* is said to have labored so ineffectually.

The early fathers of the church—or some of them—had another method of interpreting the miracles, and the author has desired to give prominence to it in the following pages; and this, with some few other points, which will be seen in the progress of the work, it is hoped may offer some rational views of these disturbers of the peace of religion, and yet leave their teachings not only unimpaired, but greatly strengthened, by the intimation of a true and sure principle for their interpretation; but, again, I say this is not offered as anything new, but as something believed to be true.

The author would respectfully ask of those who may attempt to read the following work, that they will see it and judge of it as a whole, and not, by a partial reading—the eye upon a fragment only—place themselves in an unfit position to determine the true aim of the writer, who is not “ashamed” to set up what seems to him a defense of Christianity, in this so-called infidel age—a Christianity which, in the language of Bishop Sherlock, is as old as the Creation.

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CHRIST THE SPIRIT.

SECTION I.

The author of the following work has been during many years, and over no small portion of geographical space, a careful observer of the unrest which pervades, in this age, a large number of those who, by education or by favorable opportunities, might be supposed capable of forming just opinions upon the historical and other questions connected with the origin of christianity; and as he is convinced that no small portion of this uneasiness proceeds, not from the will but from the intellect in man, he has concluded to write out a statement of the result of his studies on this subject,—in order to set forth the principle, that the Truth of the Gospel may be apprehended and received, independently of the miraculous portion of the history in which, or through which, it has come to our time.

I commence by premising, that—

To understand anything, in any sense admitting of explanation, means, that we find a place for the thing in what we know of the order of events in nature; not that we can explain or understand nature itself, otherwise than as we refer it to God. I mean to say that, by considering nature itself, it cannot be explained, neither can anything in nature be explained, or understood, which means the same thing, but by finding a place for it in what we suppose we know of the order of events in nature. I will illustrate what I mean by this simple case:—we see an object floating down with the current of a river, and we explain the motion of the object, by the current of the river, which we assume to know. But when we attempt to explain the current of the river, we resort to a theory of gravitation which finally carries us into the field of unexplained nature. And this is always the limit of all explanations of this kind; so that it becomes a maxim that, in an absolute sense, we do not know the cause of anything in the universe—except, as I say, by referring everything to God.

I think it well to premise this much, in order to destroy all ground for what might take the form of arrogance and presumption, if a place can be found for the written gospels in what may be considered the order

of nature. An impenetrable mystery overhangs all things in nature, especially when approached by what the Germans call the understanding, "judging according to sense;" and this mystery will not be removed, even in case it may appear that the gospels can be understood, in the sense above indicated.

I consider this a very important point; for I look upon it as a fatal misstep, in any one, to imagine that such a knowledge of the gospels, or of anything else in nature, can ever be reached, as shall take them from under the veil of mystery which lies, under God, over all things. My examination, therefore, will proceed entirely within the limits here indicated; and if a place can be found for the gospels within the order of nature, we may hope, through the consideration here suggested, to be preserved from a dangerous spiritual pride. A profound, yet beautiful mystery, will always remain, limiting all human efforts to understand nature; the reason for which is very simple, and is no other than this: that Nature, without any play upon words, is truly and absolutely the nature of God.

There were three principal sects among the Jews. *Neander* speaks of seven, but he includes notices of obscure and extinct opinions, and we need not go beyond the statements of *Philo* and *Josephus*, where we

find a specific account of three only. These three sects were, the *Sadducees*, the *Pharisees*, and the *Essenes*. The two first are frequently mentioned in the New Testament—the third never; but, instead of it, we meet with a multitude of references to a class of friends called “the brethren.”

Now, the *ESSENES* were a brotherhood; and I propose to show reasonable grounds for a belief that the New Testament writers were *ESSENES*, except *St. Paul*, for reasons which will appear hereafter.

In the first place, it would be absurd to suppose that the profoundly spiritual writings of the New Testament could have proceeded from the Scribes, Sadducees or Pharisees, if any dependence can be placed upon the representations of their character in the 23d chapter of *Matthew*, and in other places, wherever they are mentioned in the gospels. They were “hypocrites,” “serpents,” a “generation of vipers.”*

The Scribes were not a sect; but, as their name imports, they were a class of writers, to be found in all countries where education is not common. The author has seen them in the city of Mexico, and elsewhere, seated in public places, inditing epistles, &c., at the dictation of those who could not write themselves.

* These expressions should be noticed, as here used, in order that we may be prepared to understand them when we find them elsewhere used in Scripture, as in the last chapter of *Mark*, and in other places.

The Sadducees are thought, by some, to have been more able than the Pharisees; but they doubted the immortality of the soul, and cared little for the Scriptures, except for the books of the Law, that is, for the Pentateuch. The Pharisees were rigid formalists, strict followers of the ceremonial law, narrow minded and superstitious—praying in public places, “that they might be seen of men.”

These sects, therefore, could not have given birth to the gospel writers.

But in the character of the *ESSENES* a different class of men may be seen, for an account of whom we must consult *Philo* and *Josephus*:

Philo was born about twenty years before, and *Josephus* about thirty-seven years after the Christian era, according to received accounts.

Philo lived principally at Alexandria, but *Josephus* at Jerusalem, though both of them seem to have seen Rome and other cities. *Philo* wrote chiefly on philosophy; or, rather, he labored to turn the Jewish Scriptures into philosophy, by interpretation. The Hebrew Scriptures were to him sacred or divine allegories, enclosing a natural or philosophic sense, which, by interpretation, he sought to bring to light, his philosophic creed being that of the learned Alexandrians of

his time, derived principally from Plato. *Josephus* wrote a history of the Jewish wars, and a history of Jewish antiquities, eking out Scripture accounts by other authorities and by traditions.

The writings of the two men show that *Philo* was a thoughtful, well-disposed, considerate man; while *Josephus* was credulous, vain and ambitious, and evidently thought himself the greatest Jew of his day.

Philo is said to have lived to a great age, and, of course, to a period when he might have known the facts reported of JESUS, if they were historical; and his disposition to discover and interpret remarkable relations, in connection with the Jewish religion, would naturally have led him to comment upon the miracles of Jesus, if he had ever heard of them; but he makes no reference to him, nor to the astonishing events of his life and death.

Josephus wrote a very minute account of the events at Jerusalem and the country round about, embracing the period when the miraculous history is said to have occurred; yet he, likewise, makes no allusion to JESUS, or to any one immediately connected with him, or with his mission, except, perhaps, an allusion to the shipwreck of *St. Paul*. The mention of this shipwreck, however, considered together with his silence in regard to the miracles as reported in the Acts,

amongst which he must have lived, proves that he either never heard of these wonders, or gave no credit to them.

A forgery, fastened by scholars upon the age of Eusebius, if not upon Eusebius himself, attempted to insert some twenty or thirty lines in the writings of *Josephus*, referring to CHRIST; but they have been universally rejected, so that *Josephus* bears no testimony of there having been any such person.

It is impossible for any rational inquirer to observe this negative testimony against the reality of the history of JESUS, and not be struck with it. This, in connection with the absence of all allusion to so extraordinary a person by the contemporary Greek and Roman historians, makes it almost certain that there could have been no such miraculously endowed person. We look in vain for any contemporary notice of the gospels, or of their authors, or even of the subject of the gospels, CHRIST himself,—I mean outside of the New Testament itself. “The most remarkable man the world ever saw, lived, wrought miracles, and was publicly crucified at, or in the vicinity of a great city,” and no profane historian makes the least mention of him, until his history had become a tradition,—when his followers are named by *Pliny* with some terms of commendation; but, by *Tacitus*, the christian religion,

no doubt misunderstood, is spoken of as a "detestable superstition." This is not a favorable sign of the reality of the history of JESUS.

This view gains additional strength when we find that, in the Apostolical histories, there is no teacher or follower of Christ named, out of the Testament itself, for nearly eighty years from the date of the new era, when some disputed epistles of *Clement*, and the writings of *Hermas* are *supposed* to date, according to *Neander*; and then, another blank occurs down to A. D., 110, when some disputed epistles of *Ignatius* occur, and then we pass on to A. D., 120, when the name of *Papias* occurs, who is remarkable for excessive superstition, and a belief in all sorts of fables.

If we deduct thirty years, as the life-time of JESUS, there will remain still some fifty years to *Clement*, and about eighty to *Ignatius*, and nearly an hundred years to *Papias*, within which a mythical story might pass over into an accredited history, in popular opinion, especially in an age when printing was unknown, and ignorance almost universal; and still more easily might this have happened, when those who knew the real state of the case, as I expect to show, were solemnly sworn to secrecy.

In addition to this, there comes in the philosophical

doctrine of the permanent order of nature, tending to enforce the same conclusion; for, although this doctrine is general, and does not definitively fix the line between the natural and the miraculous, yet the doctrine is sufficiently established, among thinking men, to make it certain, to a disciplined mind, that the curing of a physically blind man by spittle and earth; the actual walking on the water by a grown real man; the actual raising of one from the dead, who has been dead four days, and whose body stank; though, I say, the line between the possible and the impossible be considered as indefinite on the doctrine of order, still such miracles as these must be regarded as impossible, or no relations can be so; and if we accept these miracles as historical realities, we must refuse the idea of law altogether, and must admit that there is no truth in the doctrine which affirms an *order* in the course of nature; and if this can be affirmed—that is, if the doctrine of order can be denied—we must then deny the possibility of science, in all its branches; and this must be extended to logic and reasoning, for these depend upon the permanent operation of our faculties, and then there could be no further reasoning, or inquiry, even into the subject itself under consideration, and we must hold our hands and receive everything as equally possible, and must live in an acknowledged anarchy, of

both nature and intellect. In such a case, we should have no rule for selecting and preferring, among ancient relations, any one from many; we should have, for example, no ground in reason for rejecting the ancient Greek mythology—for this mythology can only be rejected by that decision of the reason which excludes it from the order of nature, and denies to it a veracious basis in that order, as literal truth. Hence, in modern times, that mythology is looked upon as poetry, or as philosophy in fiction, and by interpretation a great deal of beauty is discovered in it.

These considerations will gain force in proportion as we reflect—with any tolerable reliance upon our instinctive conceptions and apprehensions of the nature of God—upon the impossibility, for example, of realizing, or even imagining, without attempting to understand it, the story of the supernatural birth. That story, if taken literally, stands for us only as a form of words; for no man can conceive, or represent to his imagination even, the truth of it, and perceive, in any manner, how the infinite and invisible God could come out of his infinitude, and give occasion, in a finite sphere of action, preserving his infinitude, for a local history of his doings and sayings. Not that God does not appear in all history; but, for the very reason that he is in all history, universally, we are obliged to say

that he is not specifically in any single history. When we say that GOD is everywhere, we introduce a contradiction into our minds by affirming that he is, or has been, *especially* in some local place; for this implies that he is, or was, not in other places. Those who deny this, do not seem to perceive how easy it is to speak without ideas, that is, without adjusting ideas to their necessary conditions; but words without ideas, must necessarily be without sense.

But this may be thought a speculative consideration, or a metaphysical abstraction, which ought not to be urged, as if anything of the kind could put a limit upon the power of GOD. But when this is properly understood, it will be seen not to put a limit upon the power of GOD. It only shows that there is a limit to our own power of affirmation; it denies to us the privilege of asserting anything in contradiction to the organism of reason which GOD has given us. In this view, to submit to reason is to submit to GOD. In this obedience, we do not affirm a limitation to GOD, but we confess a limitation upon ourselves. There is no negation in GOD; nothing but infinite affirmation. If, in the imperfection of language, we seem to deny anything of GOD, we can only mean to deny the possibility of our conception of the thing; and this, I say, is simply a confession of the limitations under which we live. But,

on the other hand, this is no reason for making affirmations, with respect to the Divine Being, which we do not understand, or which enclose contradictions; for this is so far from a modest confession of weakness, or limitation, that it shows both ignorance and arrogance.

I must say just a word on another point which, however, may be better understood as the inquiry proceeds.

It is usual to speak of the four Evangelists as so many distinct and independent witnesses, giving their unbiased testimony to the verity of the recorded life of Jesus. It is not my intention to examine the gospels from this point of view. Here has been an open field of discussion ever since the period when the Bible, as of authority in itself, was urged against the asserted infallibility of the papacy. I only design to say on this point, that I am disposed to side with that school which sees the evidence of the claims of the gospel to reverence in its doctrines and teachings, rather than to base this claim upon testimony, to be derived from four witnesses, of whose personal history we know next to nothing, beyond their own allusions to themselves, and these very scanty. That four gospels, such as we have them, should so far harmon-

ize as to preclude the idea of collusion among the writers for the purpose of deception, does not oblige us to waive the explanation of that harmony to be derived from the fact that only four gospels were selected, from among over thirty, in which many discrepancies might be found, if we had them before us. History assures us that some selection from a confused mass of writings had become necessary, because of the controversies and contentions which had grown out of a multiplicity of documents destitute of that harmony which it was sought to retain, or restore, by the selection itself.

We are, moreover, at liberty to consider that writings may harmonize, both from a historical and from an ideal stand point. No books harmonize so completely as books of science, which, as we all see, have no external history, except in the lineaments of nature itself, constantly before us or within us. Now, I must plainly say that CHRIST may be regarded from two points of view; as a person, and as a spiritual principle. As a person, let it be admitted that his histories carry marks of general conformity; and if the histories did not enclose miraculous relations, they might never have been questioned; but the presence of such relations has induced many to deny the history, either wholly or in part; while some, perhaps not very many,

attribute the appearance of conformity, or what is called the harmony of the gospels, to the simple operation of a common principle working in a body of men associated together in a spiritual brotherhood,—I refer to the Essenes—such as we know did certainly exist among the Jews. This class of men, writing apparently of a person, but really of a principle, besides that they might often have copied from each other, would naturally have produced a few spiritual histories among many, having the general conformity to be seen in the four gospels. The probability of this will increase in proportion as we understand the character of the Essenes, and recognize a reality in their idea of a spiritual life, as being contained in the Hebrew sacred books. We may observe, also, that we are not in possession of a continuous history of Jesus from infancy through life; but of only one fact after the birth, at twelve years of age, recorded by Luke, and then an account of his doings and teachings, during a period not exceeding three years. Many, indeed, are of the opinion that the whole of this teaching extended over no longer a period than one year—some think it was precisely one year, astronomically measured. The early councils, in determining the Canon, excluded all of the relations which were calculated to disturb the harmony they desired to preserve in the church.

Besides, modern criticism has unquestionably disclosed many dislocations in the gospels, very troublesome to a mere literalist. Not to know this, is to be unacquainted with modern philosophical writings upon this subject. But such difficulties cannot, in the least, disturb the view I hope to present, by which it may be seen that the truth of Christianity exists independently of all such criticisms. When Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," he expressed a truth which, as it was true before the written gospels appeared, so it would survive their disappearance if they could be destroyed.

SECTION II.

Thus far I have set out the negative view; and if there were no other I should rest in this, and would deny the reality of the history of JESUS, so far as it embodies the miraculous, and should think myself honoring God in doing so; for it is not paying suitable respect to his wisdom, or power, to receive the story of JESUS as literally true. God has not shown his light to one age, or race, and then abandoned it to the chances of transmission to other ages and countries by fallible means, which man may misunderstand or misemploy to his own, or his neighbor's injury. The truth of GOD is eternal, and can neither be put into old bottles, nor into bottles liable to grow old.

But there is another point of view, from which a sublime spiritual history may be seen, in the external and mythical representations presented to us in the

gospels; the same spiritual view which, seen through the veil of the Old Testament, carried into captivity the faculties of *St. Paul*, and made him a preacher of the truth of God.

To see this may require some study and patience, and perhaps some self-denial, not to say self-sacrifice—not without its reward—the first step in which may be the admission that we may have something to learn on this subject, which may possibly run counter to the prejudices of a life-time of acquiescence in formalized creeds; and yet it shall present a true view of CHRISTIANITY—such as we may feel certain would have been acceptable to *St. Paul* himself, who, as I expect to show, asserted a doctrine, as primitive Christianity, which has been measurably lost for many ages, but which ought to be revived and re-asserted.

To understand this view, I will suppose, there is a general acquaintance with the Scriptures; first, as an external representation, from which a certain internal view is to arise, this latter being something quite different from a dreamy idealism, which is so apt to run into an imaginative enthusiasm, bespeaking illusion or delusion, rather than sober sense;—for I hope one may be a true christian and yet be a sensible man.

An acquaintance with the Scriptures being thus assumed, I would ask next, that the character of the

ESSENES, as described by *Philo* and *Josephus*, be not glanced at, but carefully studied; and, of the Essenes, particularly that portion of them described by *Philo*, under the name of THERAPEUTÆ, in his Treatise on the Contemplative Life.

The account by *Josephus* may be found in two places; in the Antiquities, book 2d, sec. 8; and in the Wars, book 18, sec. 1. In *Philo*, there are three places where the ESSENES are described, to wit; in an Essay "on the Virtuous being also Free," (Bohn's ed., vol. 3, p. 523, &c.); again, among what are called "Fragments", (vol. 4); but principally, in the entire Essay "On the Contemplative Life," (vol. 4.)

It will be necessary to read these accounts very carefully and thoughtfully, and to note the similitudes between the doctrines of the Essenes and those of the gospels; not that those of the latter do not transcend everything reported of the Essenes by *Philo* and *Josephus*, for these writers must not be supposed fully acquainted with, and disposed to publish, the Essene doctrines, since these were kept secret with the greatest possible care. The members of the brotherhood were admitted into the fraternity only after a three years' novitiate, and they were then not only sworn to secrecy, but they were sworn also to commit nothing

to writing, of their secrets, except in allegory and symbolism.

These people were called "HOLY," because of their "piety and devotion to God." They had everything in common, and no one suffered from the want of anything that another had. A most remarkable feature in their history was their custom of assembling and listening to interpretations of the Hebrew sacred writings, from the Elders among them; and here we may consider the important statement of *Philo*, which furnishes the key to their own allegorical books, to wit:

"And these explanations of the Sacred Scriptures are delivered by mystic expressions in allegories; for the whole of the LAW appears to these men to resemble a living animal, and its express commandments seem to be the BODY, and the invisible meaning under and lying beneath the plain words resembles the SOUL, in which the rational soul begins most excellently to contemplate what belongs to itself, as in a mirror, beholding in these very words the exceeding beauty of the sentiments, and unfolding and explaining the symbols, and bringing the secret meaning to the light of all who are able, by the light of a slight intimation, to perceive what is unseen by what is visible."

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of

this statement, in view of the subject under examination.

In another place the *ESSENES* are said, "to take up the Sacred Scriptures and philosophise concerning them, investigating the allegories of their national philosophy, since they look upon their literal expressions as symbols of some secret meaning of nature, intended to be conveyed in those figurative expressions."

They are said, also, "to have writings of ancient men, who, having been the founders of one sect or another, have left behind them many memorials of the allegoric system of writing and explanation, and they imitate the general fashion of their sect; so that they do not occupy themselves solely in contemplation, but they likewise compose psalms and hymns to God in every kind of metre and melody imaginable."

These extracts furnish but a slight specimen of the character of this extraordinary sect of the Jews, and for full satisfaction it is necessary to have recourse to the works from which they are taken, viz: the works of *Philo* and *Josephus*.

I will just say, in passing, that, in consequence of the similitude of the doctrines and usages of the *ESSENES*

to those of the CHRISTIANS, as founded upon the New Testament, many have attempted to show, or have asserted—for it is but bare assertion—that the Essenes were the Christians, as having had an origin subsequent to the publication of the gospel. But no competent scholar assents to this; *Basnage*, among others, denying it, while *Josephus* speaks of the temperate habits of the Essenes with the highest eulogy, by which, as he says, many of them lived to the advanced age of one hundred years. Now, it is impossible that a sect originating at, or after the publication of the gospel, could have furnished examples of followers reaching the age of one hundred years, during the life-time of *Josephus*. Besides, it is well known that the Free Masons of the present day not only claim, through their accredited lecturers, as by Dr. Oliver and others, that Free Masonry has come down from the Essenes; but they assert that the Essenes were in possession of what they call the Temple secrets, in the days of Solomon. It is impossible, therefore, for a single moment, to allow that the Essenes were not older than the publication of the gospel of Christ. Among others, *Eusebius* himself endeavors to make it appear that the Essenes were the original Christians, which opinion led him to make a most remarkable statement in regard to their secret books, which will be referred to in its proper place.

A modern Essayist,* a spirited, but not a profound writer, has undertaken to show a perfect parallel between the doctrines of the Essenes and those announced in the gospels; and he asserts that the similitude is so exact and complete that, unless the credit of *Josephus* can be destroyed, by which it might be inferred that he fraudulently suppressed the name of the Christians, and substituted that of the Essenes, in his account of this sect, it must be confessed that there was no need of the appearance of Christ, as his doctrines were all anticipated. This writer forgot that, for his purpose, it was not only necessary to destroy the credit of *Josephus*, but that of *Philo* also—a much more important witness. But the Essay in question is only an idle exercise of ingenuity, serving but to show the importance of the sect of the Essenes in the history of Christianity.

I would now desire the following consideration to be maturely weighed: that, in every nation, there may always be made, or conceived, a division of the people into the intelligent and the unintelligent. It is unnecessary to speculate upon the proportions and gradations in these, or as to where the line may be drawn which should mark the separation. The least obser-

* Mr. De Quincey.

vation must satisfy us that such a division may always be made, more particularly in long established governments, and still more certainly, or distinctly, in theocratic governments; the main distinction turning upon the principle of obedience to the law, one portion obeying the law from intelligence and insight into the reason of the law, and the other yielding a blind, or constrained obedience, from the force of education, custom, habit, &c.

Among the Jews, the latter described class, we can not but suppose, would include the *Sadducees*, who were a tribe of sensualists; and the *Pharisees*, who were strict observers of all the forms and ceremonies of the law, hoping to win the rewards of piety, which are essentially free, by an outward compliance with usages and ceremonies, which had so far taken the place of the spirit of the law, that they are said to have made the Commandments of God of no effect, by their traditions (*Matt.* 15, 6).

To return to *Philo*: He tells us that the Scriptures were regarded by the *ESSENEs* as a living animal; and in this statement I find a place to insist strongly upon the opinion, that their own sacred books were mystical and symbolical interpretations of the older Scriptures.

I now appeal to a volume made up from early works on Christianity, and preserved in the writings of the ancient Fathers of the Church, translated principally by Archbishop *Wake*, and published under the title of the "Apocryphal New Testament."

There is good reason to suppose that, over and above these few preserved relics of the early ages of Christianity, there were a great many similar books then in existence, including over thirty, some say over fifty gospels, nearly all of which have perished, simply because the Athanasian Council did not choose to retain them as canonical, and we of this age are deprived of the opportunity of consulting them.

Assuredly we may deny the right of the Athanasian Council to confine our judgment of CHRISTIANITY to what may depend upon the few books the members of that Council saw fit to pronounce genuine; but as their action has had the effect to throw into oblivion nearly all of the other records, we must be content to look into the volume just named for such collateral information as may be gleaned from it.

Among these records I find the Epistle of Barnabas of great importance, as a specimen of allegorical interpretation, such as I suppose was common among the Essenes, and which has a remarkable parallel in a portion of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. I refer

especially to his exposition of what is meant by the **TEMPLE OF GOD**; and not to the fanciful interpretation, if it is one, of the number 318.

But the Visions, Commands, and Similitudes of **Hermas**, in the same volume, are much more important. Without dwelling on details I will refer to the eighth Similitude, where a mystical shepherd is introduced as expounding a *Vision*, in these words:—

“This great tree which covers the plains and mountains, and all the earth, is the **LAW OF GOD**, published throughout the whole world. Now, this Law is the **SON OF GOD**, who is preaching to all the ends of the earth. The people that stand under its shadow, are those who have heard his preaching, and believe,” &c.

In these Visions of **Hermas**, which may possibly be a genuine Essene work, the **SON OF GOD** is spoken of in several ways; here, we see, as the **LAW OF GOD**; but, manifestly, not the written **LAW**, for that was not published to all the ends of the earth. The spirit of the Law, that is, the life of it, was therefore referred to; for this is published in the consciences of all men throughout the world.

In another place an Angel is represented as expounding another Vision (in the ninth Similitude) and says:—“I will show thee all those things which the

Spirit spake to thee under the figure of a church. For that Spirit is the Son of God."

The Church had appeared to *Hermas* in the form of a woman. Here, therefore, we see the Spirit of the Church called the SON OF GOD. This is an instructive passage if we consider it well. We may remember that St. Paul speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ, whose spirit, therefore, is the spirit or life of the Church, the same Spirit, which *Hermas* call the SON OF GOD. In these different forms of expression we need only see so many modes of personifying a certain invisible Spirit, the Spirit of the Church; or, of the Hebrew Scriptures, according to the Essenes; and yet the same Spirit, the mother of itself, and its own father no less, however strange this language may seem.

If now, we bear in mind the view of the *ESSENES*, who regarded the Sacred Scriptures as a living animal, having a letter as the body, and a soul as the spirit,—and that, as a secret brotherhood, they were under the most solemn oath not to reveal their doctrine verbally, and not to write of it except in allegory and symbolism, "as they received it,"—it will appear the most natural thing in the world, that some of their own expository or interpretative books would be writ-

ten on the the simple idea of personifying the SOUL, that is, the LIFE of the Scriptures,—or of the Church, this being the same Spirit,—and then representing this person, thus set forward, as speaking forth the wisdom of the fathers of the nation, and teaching the same by parables and by symbolic miracles, the interpretation of the latter always turning upon moral disorders cured by a spiritual life of Truth and Virtue.

Such a purpose being conceived, many might adopt it, or copy from each other, with additions, producing, a general harmony in the midst of variety. This would account for the very numerous gospels said to have been in existence in the early ages of christianity, most of which have perished. This would account, also, for there being no mention made of the Essenes in the New Testament, as preserved to us, except as the “brethren;” for the Essenes knew each other as brethren, as the Freemasons do at the present day, who claim a descent from them. Whoever determined to set the example of writing in that manner would naturally have selected the name of a known *victim to truth*, and such victims are not scarce in any age, as the foundation of the picture; and such a name might have been at hand in that of JESUS, though no mention is made of such a person in history, because the actual

events of his life might not have awakened universal attention.

The gospels were written in Greek, and not in Hebrew, unless we take into view one, now lost, supposed to have been a gospel by Matthew — by some imagined to have furnished the principal materials for the first three gospels in the Canon. This must seem very strange, except on the supposition of an Alexandrian origin. We may explain this by attributing them to the Essenes, or to that portion of the Essenes known as Therapeutæ, who resided at Alexandria, where Greek learning was cultivated, and where the Greek language was spoken. The scene was laid, with great poetic propriety, at Jerusalem; because that was the headquarters of the worldly priesthood, who had made the law of none effect by their traditions; and these were made the murderers of the Spirit, personified in Christ, to represent the doctrine that the letter killeth; and yet the Spirit of Truth was exhibited as rising again, and appearing to its followers; for this illustrates the privilege of those who possess faith in God's Holy Law in the heart — the true Christ, according to St. Paul — all of which I expect to show.

I have now, as may be seen, expressed the opinion that, in the history, or histories of Christ, we have a

representation, in the form of history, or biography, of the LIFE, or SPIRIT, of the Hebrew sacred books, such as it was conceived to be by the members of a secret society, or brotherhood, described by *Josephus* as the ESSENEs, and referred to, also, under this name, by *Philo*, who gives, however, a more detailed account of them as THERAPEUTÆ, or physicians,—meaning physicians of the soul, as the historian expressly states.

Before leaving this section, and passing on to the proofs I shall adduce in favor of the view I have intimated, I wish to make one remark upon the extent and nature of the negation suggested in this, and in the preceding section. I know that many are of opinion that, without a strict belief in the personality of Jesus, there can be no such thing as Christianity. The personal life of Christ is supposed to be the model set up for the imitation of all Christians; and, if that personality be denied, it is thought that nothing would remain to be imitated, and Christianity would become a name without substance.

I might here point out the purely external view which this opinion presents of Christianity, as if its entire life lay in the past, and is comprised in certain written representations we have of it, the independent spiritual existence of Christ being thereby wholly

ignored, or placed, at all events, beyond the reach of man. But let this pass. I have already pointed out the portion of the history which appears to call for interpretation, without supposing an actual reality to it; and this is the miraculous portion of it. There is no disposition to bring into question any other part of the history. Now, this portion of the history neither is, nor can be, an object of imitation to any one. No Christian of the present day assumes to imitate Christ in working miracles; and, therefore, if this portion of the history shall be considered symbolical and mythical, and this alone be studied with a view of interpretation, not only would there be nothing removed from the history admitting of imitation, but we may hope, by means of interpretation, to bring this very portion itself within the field, even of possible imitation, by exhibiting its natural side, or point of view. As miraculous, it cannot be imitated; but as symbolical teaching, it may be full of the most valuable and important instruction.

It is thought, I know, by many, that miracles are the proper authentication of Christ's character as the Son of God. I shall have something to say on this point in another place, and at present will merely remark that a miracle is a mere something to wonder at. As a miracle, to be really and truly such, must be some-

thing beyond the field of nature, it cannot furnish a ground for any inference beyond itself. We cannot reason, from such a fact, *into* the order of nature — for, by supposition, it lies beyond this order; and as we know nothing of any other order than the order of nature, and know nothing of any connection a miracle might have beyond the natural order of events, we can infer nothing legitimately from a miracle beyond itself. A miracle stands, I say, unconnected with things in nature; and, as we know nothing of its connections beyond nature, we can no more adduce a miracle to prove its worker to be the Son of God, than we can adduce it to prove that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled tri-angle is equal to the sum of the squares upon the other two sides. There is no connection of ideas between the postulate of a miracle and anything else whatever, either within or without nature; and, therefore, no inferences can be drawn from a miracle to anything else, either within or beyond nature.

A seeming miracle may, nevertheless, convey a beautiful teaching, and this is what I hope to show.

I must suggest, in passing, that we may, or rather we must, narrow our idea of CHRIST, by seeing him only in the recorded history, and forgetting that Christ, as the true object of faith, “was” before Abraham. If

we cannot see him as before all records of him, with the assistance which the records give us, how, I would ask, can we see him as present in the history of man, of whom he is the Life? How, I would ask, can he, in such a view, be recognized as present, now, to the believer? A historical Christ—that is, an external history of Christ—can do no more than awaken in the soul of the believer a sense of that spiritual reality, which corresponds to the outward history, and becomes the true ground of faith in the reality of the history itself. But as, in this inward Christ, there is nothing corresponding, or answering to the miracles as external realities, their presence in the history, regarded as real, is so far from furnishing a support to the history, that they become necessarily an obstacle to faith. It is my wish to remove this obstacle, by showing that the miracles, as such, were introduced, not as historical realities, but as symbolical of spiritual realities, to which there is a real correspondence in the believing soul.

By this process I would endeavor to bring to light the possible unity of the inward and the outward Christ.

We may well consider, in this connection, that those who confine our knowledge of Christ to the limits of the written record, lose all hope of supplying any por-

tion of the unwritten history referred to in the closing verse of John's gospel: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

This passage in John cannot be supposed to refer to the acts of a historical person, but must be supposed to refer to the spiritual Christ, as the life of the world; whose history must, indeed, be commensurate with the world itself. It is plain, from this passage in John, that in the written history, or histories of Christ, we have but a fragment, and a very small fragment, of his life; and if we insist upon knowing him only as he is presented to us in the written records, we must know him only as reduced in his proportions to the dimensions of those records. But this would be to know Christ only externally, as a dead history, and to miss him as he is a divine life—perhaps, precisely under the judgment of the text: "whosoever will save his life, shall lose it," &c.

SECTION III.

There are several distinct indications in the gospels of the representative character of Christ, — passages, by which the writers of the gospels, indicate, as I say, the two things, *the Letter and the Spirit* of the sacred books, the object of the gospel-writers being to exhibit in the form of the history of a person, the doctrine of the **ESSENES**; that is, their interpretation of the Hebrew sacred books, the spirit of which they regarded as a certain invisible **LIFE**, morally and spiritually active in the soul of man.

As examples of the method by which the writers of the gospels indicate this double nature of the Scriptures, to wit, its *Letter* and *Spirit*, personified in **CHRIST**, I refer to the following passages :

In the third chapter of John, we have the story of the interview between **CHRIST** and *Nicodemus*, in which the necessity of being born again is insisted upon ; and

Nicodemus is instructed that, Except a man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the KINGDOM of God.

In this declaration we must consider CHRIST as speaking in the name of the Scriptures, mystically teaching *Nicodemus* the doctrine of the ESSENEs that, although the Scriptures are able to make a man wise unto salvation, yet, to this end, it is necessary not only to receive them in their outward form, as so much *Letter*, here symbolized by *Water*, but that the internal sense must also be understood, symbolized by the *Spirit*. To be born of Water and the Spirit, means to understand the Scriptures in both their outward and their inward sense; that is, their water and spirit, or Letter and Spirit. The Scriptures are first received in the Letter; but in souls prepared for it, there enters a knowledge of their internal or spiritual sense; and this constituted the New birth among the Jews; which *Nicodemus* is represented as not understanding. For this ignorance he was rebuked, because, being a teacher in Israel, JESUS assumes that he ought to have known of this doctrine. It was not new, therefore, as declared by CHRIST, but was a doctrine which, as we see, ought to have been familiar to one occupying the place of a Teacher, and which was no doubt well

understood by the Essenes, as being their peculiar doctrine.

Again; in *John ix: 6*, Christ is represented as curing a blind man by clay made of *spittle* and *earth*.

Here we have the same indication of the representative character of Christ. The blind man we must consider as morally and spiritually blind, not physically blind; and this spiritual blindness is removed by the Scriptures, which are metaphorically represented as anointing the eyes, that is, the eyes of the understanding, with its *Letter* and *Spirit*—here represented as *earth* and *spittle*. The illustration in this case is presented in a very simple figure, yet it is highly instructive to one who recognizes the metaphorical and figurative character of a large portion of the sacred writings.

In *John vi: 53*, the same doctrine is presented in a much bolder figure. Here CHRIST is made to say,—Except ye eat of the FLESH of the Son of Man, and drink of his BLOOD, ye have no LIFE in you.

Here, again, CHRIST must be regarded as the Scriptures personified; and the writer of the gospel makes him teach in this strong yet figurative language, and in verses connected with it, that the mere knowledge of the Letter, which is compared to *flesh*, “profiteth

nothing," (verse 63,) but that it is necessary to understand also the *Spirit*; that is, to drink of the *blood* of the SON of MAN; for it is the BLOOD, the *Spirit* that "quickeneth," (verse 63.) This figure was particularly appropriate among the Jews, who believed that the life of an animal was in its blood,—the object of this teaching being to set forth the necessity of receiving the very LIFE of the sacred Hebrew writings in order to salvation.

Again: in the symbolic scene presented at the crucifixion, *John xix: 34*, a soldier is represented as piercing the side of JESUS, when, forthwith came there-out *blood* and *water*.

Jesus, however real a person he might have been, and there is no disposition to deny the reality of his life, within the range of possibility, was made nevertheless the basis of a mythical history of the Life of the sacred writings, as understood by the Essenes; and in this allusion to *blood* and *water*, as flowing from a wound in his side, the writer of the gospel indicates, as I say, his representative character, and that he represented the *Spirit* and the *Letter* of the Hebrew Scriptures,—here symbolized by *blood* and *water*.

Again; we have the very same doctrine taught in the sacred and impressive supper-scene; where the *Letter* is represented by the *Bread*, and the *Spirit* by the *Wine*, which are called the *body* and the *blood* of CHRIST:—that is, CHRIST represented the Sacred Scriptures, having a *Letter* and a *Spirit*, symbolized by his *body* and *blood*, or *flesh* and *blood*, in the language of a preceding chapter, which are here figured by *bread* and *wine*. In all of these references we have but an accumulation of symbols for the Sacred Scriptures, as having a *Letter* and a *Spirit*, represented by CHRIST.

Again; we have the very same indication of the representative character of CHRIST in the two miracles, of feeding the multitudes—five thousand in the one case, and four thousand in the other; in each case there being both *loaves* and *fishes* used; the *loaves* symbolizing the written Law, and the *fishes* its living Truth. I shall show, in its proper place,* from the gospel itself, the most decisive proof that neither of these miracles were real; but by loaves and fishes is to be understood *doctrine*, the miracles being merely a species of parable, only they come to us as if acted, instead of being spoken.

It would require much time and space to exhibit the teaching designed to be conveyed by these two mira-

cles; but my present object requires only that I refer to them as among the many instances in which two things are exhibited, by the writers of the gospels, having a common signification, to wit: the Letter and the Spirit of the Hebrew sacred writings.

There is one other place in which the representative character of CHRIST is taught by a very beautiful symbolic scene, to wit: *John* xvii—in the account of the Transfiguration. In this scene we are taught that CHRIST represented both the *Law*, figured by *Moses*, and the *Prophets*, figured by *Elias*;—that is, the SPIRIT of TRUTH is the same, whether recognized in the *Law* or in the *Prophets*. Of these Two, it may be said, that it is the office of the prophet to declare eternal TRUTH; which, because it is eternal, has no special reference to times, places, or persons; but the office of a Law-giver is to announce commandments, and to institute significant ceremonies and usages, the object of all of these being to guide the Soul into the way of TRUTH; but, in order that these laws, &c., may be enduring, they must be based upon some true, that is, eternal principles. Therefore, CHRIST, as personating the TRUTH in this high sense, must be exhibited as representing both the LAW and the Pro-

phets; and this is beautifully done in the Transfiguration scene.

I will merely remark, at this stage of my inquiry, that the uniform doctrine of the New Testament sets forth the *Spirit*—the *Spirit* of the *Letter*—as that which is to be sought by those who would have life indeed. The *letter*, or ceremonial law, is comparatively worthless. St. Paul's language is very decided: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." But this agrees with *John*, vi: 63: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing;" the flesh here referred to being the manna of *Moses*—that is, the Law of *Moses*; which, in verse 32, we are told was not from Heaven! In this same Spirit CHRIST had just warned his hearers (verse 27) to "labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." This enduring meat is Christ, as the Spirit, which, in *John* iv: 11, is called *living water*, instead of the water of Jacob's well. Here we have, indeed, another instance of the symbolism, of which I have been speaking. Jacob's well represents the written Law, while the Spirit of the Law is called "living water," which Christ is said to give. This living water is Christ, the Spirit—the Spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The doctrine of the New-birth has been the source of great difficulty in the Christian Church, from, as I suppose, a misunderstanding of the real import of the doctrine, as it comes to us in the gospels. There is a positive ground in nature for this doctrine, independently of the Scriptures; and we may see that it is recognized in the Institutes of Menu. All Hindoos of the Brahman order, or caste, are supposed to be "twice-born," and they are called the Twice-born; the first birth being from "a mortal mother," the second from "a spiritual mother;" and this last is supposed to transcend infinitely, in value, the first. In Dubois' India, the ceremony of the supposed passage into the second birth is described with considerable minuteness; though the real second-birth is not amenable to any ceremony whatever: "The wind bloweth, as it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The second-birth, of which we read in the gospels, must be supposed to have had its rise under the influence of the Jewish Scriptures; and it means, strictly, an entrance into the Spirit of the Hebrew sacred writings—for these were regarded as divine; and a knowledge of the Spirit of them constituted the second-birth to a Jew, as such.

In the Christian Church, very few passages of Scripture have been more handled than the declaration of CHRIST to *Nicodemus*, requiring a New-birth as a necessary condition, before it is possible to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and the doctrine has occasioned about an equal amount of intense suffering and extravagant joy—neither of them, perhaps, coming within the bounds of rationality—possibly because the doctrine is delivered with obscurity, and no marks, or signs, are given, by which a compliance with it may be known.

If the several texts referring to this doctrine are taken literally, it will be impossible to extract any meaning out of them; and all men, of plain common-sense understandings, are truly in the condition of Nicodemus in respect to it. It is easy to denounce this state as carnal, &c., and threaten endless woe upon a well-disposed soul, who, because, perhaps, of being unconscious of having done, or designed evil in the world, may be the less accessible to the experience supposed to characterize the New-birth. Such a soul finds it difficult to force upon itself that sense of sin which the modern theory seems to require, as a pre-requisite to the visitation of grace; but, as the letter demands something, under a tremendous penalty, and that something is wholly indefinite, an immense suffering is gone

through by many, in mere anxiety, before there is any internal operation which can be construed into the desired sense of grace. The threatened penalty takes hold most readily of a conscious sinner, because every sinner is a slave, and full of fear by nature; and hence, under fitting external circumstances, a sinner is easily brought into a state of dreadful fear, which, working with a sense of sin, brings the subject of it into a "foretaste of hell," until at last, overcome by exhaustion, he yields himself a confessed criminal, willing to undergo any penalty a supposed angry and vengeful Deity may see fit to impose. This submission is attended with a physiological sense of relief—of ease; and this is presently decided to be the immediate act of God, and a communication of his grace. This is followed by a sense of joy, proportioned to the suffering which led the way to it.

This may properly be called physiological conversion, brought about more by the "hangman's whip," than by any elevated spiritual experience.

There is another species of this operation, where a delicate and upright mind is acted upon, chiefly through the imagination and a sympathetic sensibility, and is brought into a state of inexpressible anguish, until relieved, in some similar manner, by undergoing an

internal movement of some sort, which is seized upon as the evidence of a direct interposition of God.

Many well-disposed people pass through their whole lives, however, without being brought under these artificial influences, though they may often have witnessed something of the so-called experience, with a mingled feeling of pity and wonder; with, possibly, some occasional self-questionings as to their own state, having no other effect than to fortify a disposition already formed, to "deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God."

To understand the new-birth in the Jewish sense, we must cast our eyes over the history of the Jews, and observe the load of ceremonial laws and usages imposed upon the people as religious; and must consider the 'bondage' of those who lived under them, regarding them as divine in themselves, subjecting an offender in the least point to perdition; and then we must regard that whole system as designed originally to produce a sense of justice and love, as the spirit of those laws and usages. We must then see that CHRIST was set forward as that *Spirit* personified, to declare the spiritual law, as the New Covenant. Then we may easily see in what sense he might be represented as teaching metaphorically the doctrine of the new-birth; that is, the spiritual sense of the law, and

as declaring that without such an understanding of the law, no one could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, or into that freedom which *St. Paul* describes as the freedom of the spirit,—which released him from the bondage of the law.

To see the reasonableness of this view it is only necessary, in addition to the above considerations, to bear in mind, that *St. Paul* speaks of the Law as gendering bondage; and we must see, that this bondage was the precise antithesis to the freedom he urged, as freedom in *Christ*; that is, in the Spirit. To reach that freedom among the Jews it was necessary to be born into a sense of the Truth, as in the Law indeed, but the Law received in its *Spirit*; and this was to be born of *Water* and the *Spirit*; and as *CHRIST* represented the Life of the Old Testament, this same point is signified by his flesh and blood, &c., the Essenes regarding the Law as a living animal, comparing the external commands (and ceremonies) to the Body, whose soul was the Spirit.

The New-birth, therefore, among the Jews may be regarded as a process within their peculiar theocratic condition, living under the most absolute external Law, into the ceremonies of which every Jewish child was industriously and systematically introduced,—formal

circumcision being practiced on the eighth day after birth.

Now, the whole of the Law was originally framed, I say, with a view to the prosperity and happiness of the child; which, however, the child, while a 'minor,' could not know; and if it never discovered it, then the child always remained a minor, under what St. Paul called the bondage of the Law. But, in process of time, those who were capable of it, entered into a knowledge of the *Spirit* of the Law; saw, and understood the reasons for it; and this was to be born of both, the written and the unwritten Law, symbolized by *water* and *spirit*, *flesh* and *blood*, *bread* and *wine*; and this, in succeeding ages, signified the being born of the Law and the Gospel; for the gospel means the spiritual truth of the Hebrew sacred writings, and it is the New, or Second Covenant; yet, not as it is written, but as it is seen and known in the *Spirit*.

The whole matter of revivals, and great movements in the church, take place according to uniform Law, though it may be called Spiritual Law; for, there is no contingency, or accident, in the providence of God. While the external Law and ceremonies seem to be in conformity with the requirements of the spiritual life, men, in passing into the latter, will accept the former; and it is thus continued from generation to generation.

But when the external becomes corrupt and loses its conformity with the demands of spiritual life, nothing is more certain, than that *protests* will be made, first from individuals, but finally from whole communities. Luther was not an accident in his day.

As St. Paul is the great asserter of the doctrine of the *Spirit*, it is not out of place here to refer to the remarkable declaration in 2 *Cor.* v: 16:

Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the *flesh*: yea, though we have known CHRIST after the *flesh*, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

It may be impossible, at this day, to determine precisely the circumstances under which *St. Paul* made this reference to a knowledge of CHRIST in the *flesh*. We know that he never saw CHRIST, as a person in the *flesh* — at his conversion seeing him only in the *Spirit*. But if we regard CHRIST in his representative character, as personating the *Letter* and the *Spirit* of the Hebrew sacred Scriptures, and suppose that *St. Paul* recognized him in that character, then the sense of this passage is very plain, and may be understood in harmony with the whole design of the Epistle, in which *St. Paul* rebukes the Galatians so severely for yet following the Letter — the Letter of the Old Testament — that is, CHRIST in the *flesh*; for, although he had for-

merly leaned upon the Letter also, that is, CHRIST in the *flesh*, yet, henceforth, having obtained the *Spirit*, he determined to build upon the Letter no longer. That *St. Paul*, in some instances, by what he says of the *flesh*, refers to the Letter of the older Scriptures, is very evident; as, in Gal. iii: 3, where he asks: "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the *Spirit*, are ye now made perfect by the *flesh*?"—for he had just asked the question: "Received ye the *Spirit* by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?"* By the *flesh*, therefore, he meant the works of the Law; that is, the Letter. He tells us that the Letter killeth; and, in keeping with this, we may understand that it was the *Letter* that crucified the *Spirit*; which, however, cannot be destroyed, but, in its turn, it crucifies the flesh, that is, the Letter; and with it the affections and lusts, for the Spirit is supreme. Hence, *St. Paul* says: "If CHRIST"—that is, the *Spirit*—"be in you, the body is dead."

To *St. Paul*, CHRIST was a *Spirit*; and that *Spirit* was the subject of his preaching, and the object of his

* There is some ambiguity in *St. Paul's* use of the word Faith. It was synonymous with him for what, in *Rom.* ii: 16, and xvi: 25, he calls *his gospel*; and this means the Truth, as preached by him. In *Rom.* xi: 8, "the word of Faith" also means the word of Truth. Everywhere in *St. Paul's* Epistles, gospel means Truth. The gospel of God is the Truth of God; and this is the Faith—that is, the Truth that *St. Paul* preached.

life. He preached CHRIST crucified; that is, the *Spirit* which the *Letter* crucified; for the whole purpose of his preaching seems to be to bring out the Spirit, as supreme over the Letter. So, he tells the Corinthians, in his first Epistle, ii: 2, that he determined to know nothing among them save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified; that is, the *Spirit* which the *Letter* had crucified.

St. Paul's Epistles express a considerable variety, and they cannot be interpreted by any one view. Sometimes he refers to CHRIST as purely a *Spirit*, and speaks of his living by that *Spirit*. "I live," says he, "yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me." He also temporized, making himself all things to all men, in order, as he says, to gain some to God. He uses, even, this language, howsoever it is to be explained, Rom. iv: 5: "If the truth of GOD hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"

St. Paul, I say, could be all things to all men — in order that he might, by all means, save some. He could accommodate himself to the Jews, to save the Jews; to them that were under the law, that he might gain them that were under the law; to them that were without law (not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that he might gain them that are without law; to the weak he became weak (letting them,

no doubt, retain their superstitions), that he might gain the weak (*I Cor.* ix: 20, 22). He tells the Corinthians to give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to Gentiles, nor to the Son of God: "Even," says he, "as I please all men in all things"—giving, as his motive, that they might be saved (*I Cor.* x: 32, 33). He had already told the Corinthians that he had fed them with milk, and not with meat; that he could not speak to them as spiritual, but as carnal, "even as unto babes in CHRIST" (*I Cor.* iii: 1, 2); and then he gives them a warning, which seems to be overlooked by all modern inquirers into the gospel. He accuses the Corinthians of being yet carnal, and gives, as a sign of it: "For while one saith, I am of *Paul*; and another, I am of *Apollos*; are ye not carnal?" exclaiming: "who is *Paul*, but a minister?" &c.

Now, if *St. Paul* could be all things to all men, even for a pious purpose, we must not suppose that his Epistles can be explained from any one stand-point. If he could allow babes to have milk, must not something of this kind be expected in his Epistles,—making it in the highest degree obligatory on us to keep in mind his own caution, not to lean too much upon the literal sense of his own Epistles? Most certainly, it is the neglect of this caution by most controversialists, that has made *St. Paul's Letters* a theological battle-

field, for whole centuries past; and they will continue to furnish materials for controversy so long as we refuse to profit by his own declaration, that the Letter killeth. *St. Paul* evidently used language discursively, allegorically, metaphorically; not confining himself to a strict sense, but taking the widest range of an eloquent advocate; and it is the greatest possible absurdity to build up an important doctrine upon scattered texts drawn from his epistles. He speaks of Christ in so many ways that his authority may be advanced for almost any doctrine whatever. CHRIST is a person; then he is a spirit:—he is the church, the head of the church; and his Body is the Body of the church, or the church is the Body of Christ, &c., accommodating his language no doubt, to the persons he addressed, and the purpose he had in view.

Even where *St. Paul* seems to speak most positively of the resurrection of CHRIST, and of his having been seen of *Cephas*, then of the twelve, then of above five hundred—of which fact, by the way, we have only one witness, not five hundred witnesses,—then of *James*, then of all the Apostles, he adds,—and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time, 1 *Cor.* xv : 5–7. From this statement we are at liberty to consider that *Cephas*, and the others referred to by *St. Paul*, saw CHRIST in the same manner as

St. Paul himself saw him; and certainly we may understand that CHRIST was not seen by *St. Paul* as a person, but as a spirit.

The remarkable declaration that though he had known CHRIST in the *flesh*, he would henceforth know him no longer in the *flesh*,—if it had been uttered after the 10th and before the 15th century, and had been received literally,—would probably have brought him to the stake:—yet if we interpret it as above, it is easily understood. He did not refer to a person; and although JESUS was crucified, yet, that crucifixion was itself used by the gospel writers as a symbolism to teach the very doctrine, asserted by *St. Paul*, that the Letter killeth. The priesthood of Jerusalem, bound to the ceremonial Law, represented, in this scene, the *Letter* of the Scriptures,—as I will show in another place. I repeat, that the scene of the crucifixion was designed by the Essenes to represent the death of the *Spirit*, the CHRIST, by the *Letter*—though they intended also to represent, by what followed, that the Spirit cannot perish; but, as often as it is buried beneath the Law, literally understood, that is, the *Letter*, it rises again, and is ever accessible to those who, by living in the Spirit of Truth, have kept the mystical covenant between God and man.

If this view be thought to make the death of CHRIST of no effect, then, certainly, I must say that, as a person, his death is no more to us than the death of thousands who have perished in his name, every one of whom may have given testimony to the power of the *Spirit* of CHRIST in the soul. The resurrection of CHRIST means, therefore, the resurrection of the *Spirit* of TRUTH, which is eternal, and cannot die—and we appropriate it by living to it; yet not to a person, much less to the person of one whose mortality is, in some sense, an accredited fact, in the universal belief of Christendom.

But it is not my purpose to examine, at length, the Epistles of *St. Paul*, which are themselves expository, and are open to much discussion,—written, as they were, at different times and places, and under varying circumstances, now under strong and earnest convictions, and then, in another mood, he utters mildly the modest language: “I think I have the Spirit.” In one mood, he thinks himself “not a whit behind the chiefest of the Apostles” (2 *Cor.* xi: 5; in another mood, in a profound and beautiful humility, he declares himself “the least of the Apostles,” and “not meet to be called an Apostle,” because he had persecuted the Church of God.

I accept, with thankfulness, his Epistles, but am not anxiously concerned to interpret and harmonize them. I have referred to his doctrine of the *Spirit*, not as the author of that doctrine, much less as an authority for it. The doctrine is declared in *John* vi: 63: "It is the *Spirit* that quickeneth"—that is, that giveth life—"the flesh profiteth nothing." This is precisely the doctrine of St. Paul, expressed only in other language.

In the gospel the doctrine is expressed in symbolism; but St. Paul used "great plainness of speech," (2 Cor. iii: 12) and expressed openly what he meant. This difference between the mode of writing in the gospels, compared to the style of St. Paul's Epistles, may be seen throughout. The gospel writers, using pure symbolism, become impersonal to us. We do not see them as persons. They stand, as it were, behind a screen, almost impenetrable. We cannot distinguish their individualities, except that *John* shows a more speculative turn of mind than either of the others. They belonged to a secret society; a society, with a secret which they were sworn not to cast before swine, and not to give to the dogs. Here is the true ground of the symbolic character of the four gospels. Not so with St. Paul. He was not an Essene, but a convert from the Pharisees. (Acts: xxvi, 5.) He is a real person of flesh and blood, and his life is, perhaps, more instructive

than his doctrine. We see him in his discovery of the Truth, the Spirit under the Letter. This was his conversion. Then we see him as a progressive preacher of the Truth. Leaving Christ in the flesh behind him (2 *Cor.* v: 16), he feels himself called upon to press toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, forgetting those things that were behind (*Phil.* iii: 13, 14); and, at last, we see him even—"Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on," says he; "not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (*Hebrews* vi: 1, 2); as if there was a point of view on this subject, which refuses alliance with all sensuous representations whatsoever: and so there is; as every deep-feeling soul knows, who has learned to regard a future necessary fact, as already in the past. Such a soul, having passed over to the other side (*John* vi: 25), is in a right condition for singling out the wheat from the chaff of words, giving the latter to the winds.

SECTION IV.

The writers of the gospels appear to have been Jews, writing for their own people. This, at all events, must be said of Matthew, if we may judge by his commands to the disciples whom he sent forth to teach, saying: Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. *Matt. x: 5, 6.* In chapter xxviii, they are commanded, it is true, to 'teach all nations;' and Mark commands them to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel (which means Truth) to every creature. If we take these latter commands strictly, there may seem to be a contradiction between them and the prior command in Matthew; but if we interpret the expressions 'all nations' and 'all the world,' by the evident limitation with which this latter expression is used by Luke (ii: 1) referring to the decree of Cæsar, that *all the*

world should be taxed, meaning, of course, the Roman world,—then, the command to preach the gospel to all the world may mean only the Jewish world. I suppose this to be the true interpretation, and I look upon the gospel writers as Jews writing for the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The first indication we meet with that the Gentiles might be called to the truth, or have the truth preached to them, is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, where *Peter* is said to have had a call from the Spirit to preach to certain Gentiles. The preaching by Peter, in this case, did not proceed from the teaching of a person, (Acts x: 19, and xi: 12;) and when it became known to the Apostles in Jerusalem, it was evidently treated as something new, upon which there was much “disputing,” (Acts xv: 7,) resulting in a formal decision, which was communicated to certain Gentiles by “letters,” excusing Gentile converts from the necessity of keeping the law. There seems to have been no little uncertainty upon this question prior to the appearance of the converted Pharisee, St. Paul, whose force of character and earnestness overleapt the evident sectarian or national narrowness of the Apostles themselves, who, as Essenes, were the interpreters of the Hebrew sacred books exclusively for Jews,—the Jews of their own society. In chapters x to xv of the

Acts of the Apostles, we may see very plainly how the Apostles and Elders of the brethren (?) were surprised to hear that the Holy Ghost had been manifested among the Gentiles. In these chapters we see the incipient steps taken to carry the Word of God, that is, the word of Truth, beyond the seed of Abraham; and it is evident that so wide a preaching of the gospel had not entered into the idea of those by whom we must suppose the gospels were written,—who were of the secret sect of the Essenes.

Although Peter was apparently surprised into a declaration of the Truth to some few of the Gentiles, it was nevertheless Paul who looked decidedly beyond the Jewish people and saw the great principle, that the Truth is universal. Through this noble conception he became the Apostle to the Gentiles, in despite of the opposition he met with at Jerusalem, (Acts xiii:46) and he ultimately manifested a disposition to lay aside, altogether, ‘Christ in the Flesh;’ that is, the entire paraphernalia of the Jewish ceremonial law;—for this was the Flesh of Christ to which he referred.

I do not find, in St. Paul’s Epistles, any distinct or orderly statement of what he calls his [“my”] gospel (*Rom.* ii: 16). He speaks of it as a “mystery which had been kept secret since the world began” (*Rom.*

xvi: 25). He calls it "a mystery made known to him by revelation" (*Ephes.* iii: 3); and declares that, in other ages, "it was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed (he adds) unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" &c. (verses 5, 6, 7). In verse 8, he refers to "the unsearchable riches of Christ," without doubt meaning, by Christ, the Spirit; wherein, also, lay the mystery, which had been hid from the sons of men. He calls Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (1 *Cor.* i: 24); and this he refers to, no doubt, in the second chapter, (1 *Cor.*) as something that he had verbally preached,—but he does not explain it. He had preached the doctrine of "wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak (he continues) the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (verses 6, 7, 8).

Now, this *mystery* we must suppose was what he called *his* gospel; and yet he has not written a gospel.

Where, as in 2 *Cor.* iv: 3, St. Paul speaks of his

gospel as being hid only to those who are lost, we may suppose that he referred to his doctrine as he had preached and explained it verbally, and not to what we find written in his Epistles; or, we may assume that his doctrine is accessible to all men of open hearts before God, but hid from all others.

In his Epistles, he seems only to refer to some doctrine that he had verbally preached; but he does not definitively recite it in the Epistles themselves. He invokes a heavy curse upon any one, even *himself*, or an *angel*, who should preach any other doctrine than that which he had preached (*Gal. i: 8*); but he writes as if those he addressed already knew to what he referred; and, therefore, does not specifically state the doctrine which he calls a mystery. In Romans x: 8, he no doubt refers to the same doctrine — his gospel — but calls it the “faith” he preached. In this Epistle (to the Romans), chapter 10, verses 4 to 8, I shall presently point out a clue to the doctrine, and will show it to be the mystery of Christ, as the Spirit of the Letter of the Old Testament. This doctrine he preached as wisdom among the perfect; but others he fed with milk only, not meat (*1 Cor. iii: 2*).

We should not forget, or be afraid to look the fact in the face, that whatever inspiration St. Paul had, it did not protect him from one most decided error, in

sharing what appears to have been a common opinion among his brethren. In seeking the truth, we must not shut our eyes against any unwelcome fact. St. Paul, with some of the Apostles, certainly looked for the end of the world as being near at hand; and contemplated it, not in the death of an individual, but in the imagined "end" of all things; and this, too, he preached as a mystery: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 *Cor.* xv: 51, 52). In the Epistle to the Thesalonians, chapter 4, we read: "For this I say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

And this was urged in order that the holy brethren—as they are called in chapter v: 27—might comfort one another with these words—chapter iv: 18. The plain import of this is not to be explained away by alleging that it is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled. It

expresses the belief of St. Paul, that the end of the world was at hand, and that his generation should not pass before the destruction of the world should be accomplished,—as set forth in Matt. xxiv:34. We may well attribute to this opinion some portion of the almost preternatural excitement under which St. Paul appears to have written, assisting him to the strong views he everywhere expresses of the nothingness of this world and of the things of time. He no doubt thought that his preaching to the Gentiles was a necessary preparative to the coming of Christ from Heaven with a shout, and we gain nothing by closing our eyes to the real state of the case. We ought to acknowledge, that in this particular instance St. Paul was mistaken. We should be ready to consider the truth as something above us, over which we have no power, while yet we may raise ourselves to it by accepting it without reserve. Whatsoever is true, it is well for us to believe, to know, and to rest upon. We cannot stand out against it; and it is best it should be so: for it is only upon this condition that the truth can make us free. John viii:32. A variable or changeable truth, or one which could be forced into an accommodation to our specialities or limitations, could afford us no recourse against error, and no point of reliance or hope in cases of doubt and

difficulty: and if we cannot go before the "judge of all the world" in this doctrine, strictly adhered to, I do not see how we are to benefit ourselves by an attempt to compromise the truth, by which we can only darken the sun within ourselves.

The gospels, then, I regard for the present, and until I see reason to adopt another view, as having been designed originally to interpret the Hebrew Sacred Scriptures, after a mystical method, for the use of a secret society of the Jews. I look upon them as Jewish books, though written from a higher point of view than any of the books of the Old Testament; and I see nothing in them that contemplated the preaching of Truth to the Gentiles.

In the converted Pharisee, St. Paul, however, I see a great soul that looked beyond the Jewish people; one who looked upon all the nations of the earth as of one blood, and who deeply felt that the truth of God was not a merely Jewish truth, or a truth for Jews only.

But notwithstanding this, it is necessary, in order to apprehend clearly the office or the teaching of Christ, not only to regard him in his representative character as personating the Hebrew Scriptures, but, in a wider sense still; and we must consider that, while the

Essenes were Jews, and sought the Spirit of Christ in the Jewish sacred books, they were, at the same time, a profoundly spiritual class of "Holy" men, and some of them must be supposed to have attained a view of Truth in a higher than a merely Jewish sense. In the main, indeed, this might have been seen in or through the older Jewish Scriptures; yet, in its own nature, TRUTH transcends those older records. Hence, while CHRIST represents the *Truth* of the Jewish sacred writings, he is made to represent a higher order of TRUTH at the same time. Thus, he decides that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; and he revises or reverses some features of the older Law; doing away with the doctrine, for example, requiring an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,—which shows an advance in civilization and humanity, and thus proves that the older Scriptures did not express ultimate TRUTH, but a *Truth* accommodated to the times and to the people among whom it originated.

This view explains the remarkable declaration of CHRIST in the 6th chapter of John—that the "manna" (which means the doctrine) given to the children of Israel by Moses was not "bread" from Heaven (verse 32). To eat of the manna, or bread, which Moses had given, did not satisfy the hunger (for truth); and here

we have the same truth that is expressed in the 4th chapter, verse 13, where it is said, of the water of Jacob's well, that it did not quench the thirst (for truth). In both of these declarations we may clearly recognise the teaching of a reformer,—one who saw that Life does not depend upon ceremonies. But to return :

Not only is the TRUTH exhibited in a higher form in Christ, than in the older Law, but he is represented as promising a still farther advance, where he says (*John* iv: 12): "Verily, verily, I say unto you: He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do."

To believe on CHRIST means, in the first place, to believe in the Hebrew Scriptures, which he represented; and next, in the TRUTH itself, the SON OF GOD, which transcends the written Scriptures, not only as they were before the gospels were written, but after they were written also.

We have no adequate idea of TRUTH, when we imagine it can be exhausted and limited by any writings whatever. It is the measure of all that is written about it, and cannot itself be written. It judgeth all things, but is itself judged of no man. Hence, in the interpretation of the gospels, from what has been said above, we shall meet with some exhibitions, referring

more immediately to the old Jewish records, which must be understood by means of those records; but we shall find some, again, that can only be interpreted by the higher Spirit—the SPIRIT OF TRUTH itself.

Thus, the *Pool* of Bethesda, with *five porches* (*John* v: 2), refers to the Old Testament, as many have seen; the *Pool* symbolizing *Truth* (said to be in a well), to which the five books of *Moses*, as so many porches, were supposed to lead.

The allusion is also to the five books of *Moses*, in the story of the woman at *Jacob's* well (*John* iv), who had had *five* husbands, but who was then living with one not her husband. The Church is often represented in the Scriptures by a woman. Thus, in the story of the marriage at Cana, of Galilee, according to the interpretation of *St. Augustine*, the “mother” of JESUS is the *Church*, who signifies to her SON the want of the *Spirit*, which she waits for the power of, &c. In this sense the *Church*, which is a fruit of the *Spirit*, is no less the MOTHER of it; and so, the *Church* is mystically “the daughter, mother and bride of the self-same LORD.” At *Jacob's* well the *Church* is exhibited as having wandered from the five sacred books of the Law; yet this is made the occasion of declaring the sublimest doctrines of the *Spirit*, called “living water” (*verse* 10). GOD is declared to be a

Spirit (verse 24), and the doctrine is set forth, that they that worship *him* must worship *him* in *Spirit* and in *Truth*; and as this is the highest TRUTH, its personified principle is made to say, in answer to the woman's query about the coming of the *Messias*: "I that speak unto thee, am *he*" (verse 26). This language expresses the conviction of a Soul, that its realized *Truth* is the TRUTH OF GOD — that is, the SON OF GOD, the true *Messias* — whose salvation, according to the prophet *Isaiah*, "is from generation to generation." (*Is.* li: 8); for man is saved by the Truth, and no otherwise, as he is also condemned by the *Truth*, and no otherwise. Hence CHRIST, the TRUTH, is declared to be the judge of the world; for it is the office of TRUTH to judge the world.

As an instance where the interpretation does not immediately grow out of the Old Testament, we may refer to the miracle recorded in *Luke* vii: 12, 16: the raising of the widow's son. Here the son, an "only son," the *Spirit* being but one, is the *Spirit of Truth*, said to be dead. In this case the dead man is represented as being "carried out;" but the *carriers* were unholy passions, who were *carrying* their subject, the man, to some contemplated evil,—which was the condition of St. Paul himself when he was struck down by the SPIRIT OF TRUTH; for the story of *St. Paul's*

conversion, though real, and the raising of the widow's son, a myth, represent the same spiritual phenomenon. A soul, in a career of evil, is "touched" by the *Spirit of Truth*; and then, as in the case of the widow's son, "they that bare him stand still" (*verse 14*); that is, when the *Truth* visits a human soul, its passions are paralyzed, and "stand still;" and a soul, thus affected, feels that "God has visited his people" (*verse 16*).

Miracles are a species of acting parables, while parables are spoken miracles; but they both need interpretation. They both come to us as they are written, and it is as easy to write a miracle as to write a parable; but it is our business to discover what they signify, and not regard merely the outward pictures they present.

In many places CHRIST is spoken of, or speaks of himself as a unity. He is called the bread of Life; he is also the way, the truth, and the life: yet this is not said of a person; but it is said, either of the Hebrew Sacred Scriptures, or of the doctrine of *Truth* in a higher sense, as understood by the Essenes and exhibited in CHRIST.

It is quite customary to express astonishment at the spiritual wisdom exhibited by a carpenter's son, the

young and lowly JESUS. But this I regard as a mistake. The wisdom of the gospels is not that of an individual, but it is the accumulated wisdom of the Jewish people expressed through the sages of the nation, the Spiritual brotherhood, the ESSENES.

The Acts of the Apostles seem hardly to have been rightly named. There is very little said of the Apostles themselves, but a great deal of *St. Paul*, who was not an Apostle, or was not one of the Twelve. There is some appearance of symbolism in this work, but more still of a confused detail of traditions not supported by collateral evidence. The account of *St. Paul's* conversion can hardly be said to derive any countenance from his own Epistles. That conversion was, no doubt, an example of what the moderns call a subjective experience. From this point of view, its reality is unquestionable.

The Apocalypse waits yet for an explanation. Many have labored in vain to discover some meaning in it, or to devise some for it, which the soul might receive without denying its reason and its intuitions; but unless *M. Dupuis* has explained it, I know of no writer who has done so. *Dupuis* regards it as the work of a mystagogue, of some ancient school of

Sabæism, under a veil of mystery. There is a remarkable reference to the Apocalypse in the concluding portion of *Dr. Oliver's* History of Initiations, which nearly determines it to be the product of some ancient secret society,—the work of some one familiar with the Eleusinian mysteries, whose 'machinery' is said to be used. *Dupuis* has labored very ingeniously upon it, and if he has not explained it, our successors have yet to work upon it until their brains are tired, and they may pass it on to a later posterity to exercise its ingenuity upon. It may mean a great deal; but until its sense becomes manifest, it is virtually without sense, that is, for us. If we do not know what it means, how can we assume that it has a meaning at all; and, still more, on what ground can we affirm that it has a divine meaning? To know nothing of the meaning of a book may be a good reason for saying nothing about it, but it is no reason at all for asserting that it encloses not only an important but a divine sense.

A doctrine of Truth ought to have a better foundation than a book whose name has become a synonym for all that is dark and incomprehensible.

The assembly of Bishops at the Council of Laodicea in 364 omitted the Revelation from the Canon. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, A. D. 340, omits it from his list

of canonical books, and Gregory of Nazianzen, Bishop of Constantinople, A. D. 375, as also Philostratus, A. D. 380, do the same. The Council of Nice received it into the Canon about A. D. 325,—though by what strength of vote (!) is unknown.

SECTION V.

From what has now been said of the gospels, perhaps their place in history, and some idea of their original object may slowly open up before us, though it is my purpose only to point out the method to be pursued, with a few examples of interpretation.

I do not know to whom I ought to credit the interpretations that will be found in this volume. Some of them are from the ancient Fathers, as I have seen them quoted in modern writings. Some of them, though modified or qualified, may be found in the writings of the Rev. J. Clowes, M. A. Possibly some of them would hardly find an owner anywhere; at all events, I do not wish either to claim them as my own, or to hold any one responsible for them. With this remark, I proceed with what I have to say.

We must consider in the first place that the *Spirit* of the LAW, its LIFE, or SOUL, or, in other words, its

TRUTH, is a permanent *Spirit*, extending from generation to generation. It is not simply historically true in the person of *Moses*, but permanently true in the doctrine attributed to *Moses*, or published by him. It is not of paramount importance to believe that such a man as *Moses* lived, and did and said certain things, except that what he did and said has some significance for us, as being something true for us; not merely true for a particular historical time, but true for all time.

The first point to be observed, therefore, is the manner by which the SPIRIT of the sacred writings, as an eternal *Spirit*, was brought into a temporal scene, by those who determined to represent it, in the form of the history of a person. For this purpose, and with great poetic beauty, a supernatural machinery was resorted to by two of the evangelists, *Matthew* and *Luke*. A supernatural character is also sufficiently asserted for the Spirit of Truth, by *John*. *Mark*, however, introduces JESUS, as the SON OF GOD; but without any details of a supernatural birth. He is heralded by *John* the Baptist, and then it is said: And it came to pass, in those days (without telling us what days), that JESUS came from Nazareth, of Galilee, and was baptised of *John*, in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens

opened, and the *Spirit* like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from Heaven *saying*: Thou art my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased.

Each of the gospel writers, after a manner of his own, refers to the supernatural character of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH; but this was entirely in accordance with the custom of ancient times in the East. Everywhere we meet with something of it. Whoever undertook to set forth a public Teacher, from the Ganges to the Nile, and from the Nile to the Ultima Thule, took care always to assert an origin in the heavens, in some mode or other. Thus *Hercules* was said to have been "the son of the king of the gods, by a mortal woman;" and in the life and labors of *Hercules* we have a picture of Virtue, as it was understood by the early Greeks. All ancient religions are traced back to some person reputed divine, as *Osiris*, *Bacchus*, *Apollo*, &c., though no such persons ever lived. Their names and characters serve to represent the *idea* of the age in which their mythical histories took form.

In a similar manner JESUS CHRIST represents the idea of Reason, Virtue, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, &c., as these were apprehended by the Essenes, who recognized the *Spirit* as the *Life* of the Old Testament, which was, to them, both a religion and a philosophy.

To apprehend this first point, we have only to consider that the Hebrew Scriptures do really contain, or express, a certain *Spirit*; a *Spirit* of *Wisdom*, of *Truth*, of *Reason*; or a *Spirit* of *Life*, not really existing as an individual person, limited to a particular period of time, but a life-spirit, older than *Abraham*, and, indeed, as *John* boldly expresses it, the *Logos* which was with *GOD* in the beginning, and was *GOD*. The writers of the gospels have given us their opinion of this *Truth*, this *Spirit*, this *Wisdom*, this *Logos*, or this *Reason*, of the Hebrew Scriptures in the form of a history, as that of a person, whom they bring upon the scene of life by a supernatural machinery, or in a supernatural character, because it never appears in any single man whole and entire. Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is *GOD*.

But, although this is true of individual men, nothing is more certain than that the life of truth, the *SPIRIT OF TRUTH*, may be represented ideally in the form of a history; and this, in so transcendent a picture as to be revered as a truly divine life; especially when the seeming history comes to us from a remote age, and when the origin of the history is measurably enveloped in obscurity. Every man can conceive, and may represent a better life than he can live; and every nation has its ideally perfect men, who have been regarded as

divine, popular opinion readily falling into this delusion. If this was true of *Hercules*, who was worshipped in Greece, and elsewhere, as a divine personage, much more may it be true of a far greater than *Hercules*, the model-man, JESUS CHRIST. That his life should, in some particulars, seem to have been the fulfillment of prophecy, is only what the writers themselves designed should appear. Writing the histories for the purpose of representing, in a historical form, the *Spirit* of the Hebrew Scriptures, or, in a higher sense, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH itself, the authors naturally found places, or made occasions for saying that, such or such things were done, that such or such a prophecy might be fulfilled. This adds to the verisimilitude of the story, but is no proof of the fulfillment of prophecy; and students of this subject now very well understand that none of the prophecies referred to in the gospels are prophecies of precisely such a *person* as JESUS CHRIST—who is not represented as like “a root out of the ground,” nor have we any reason for believing that he was “*without form or comeliness.*” So far was he from being without beauty, that many seem disposed to think he was the perfection of beauty.

Once upon the stage, the writers of the histories make JESUS represent by his doings and sayings, what,

in their opinion, the Hebrew Scriptures were capable of accomplishing in the soul of one who received and appropriated those Scriptures in spirit and in truth.

There is no appearance of anything miraculous in the sayings of CHRIST, even though it be admitted that he spake as man never spake before him. Excellency of speech is a question of degree; and as some men speak better than others, so some one man must speak better than all. But the acts of JESUS, if regarded literally as historically represented, would overthrow all of our ideas of the order of providence, and would introduce confusion into all of our opinions upon the permanence of the laws of nature; and as it is only through the permanence of these laws that we attain the idea of God's unchangeable nature, the admission of the history of Christ's doings as literally true, would destroy our opinion of God's immutability; and with the destruction of this doctrine we should lose the very principle by which truth is distinguished from falsehood, wisdom from folly, and righteousness from sin.

But there is not the least necessity for regarding the relations in question as literal representations of actual things done by CHRIST. We may and must look at them as symbolic teaching, all of the physical miracles symbolizing the power of TRUTH in producing

moral and spiritual results. Thus, *Leprosy*, among the Jews, whatever may have been the precise nature of the disorder, symbolized sin; and when CHRIST is represented as cleansing a leper by a "touch," (*Matt.* viii: 1-5) we are to understand that when the TRUTH touches a human soul, its sin or sinful disposition departs.

The *devils* spoken of in *Matt.* viii: 16, 17, which were "cast out," were bad passions; which, in their influence over man, are very well compared to devils. They are generally, in Scripture, called ravenous birds and beasts, as vultures, cormorants, dragons, vipers, &c. When serpents and devils are said to tempt man,—these are metaphorical expressions for evil affections and passions: and when angels are said to support, strengthen, and minister unto him; these are good principles which sustain, beautify and reward him.

The *wind* and *waves* of *Matt.* viii: 23-27, are also violent and turbulent passions, which it is the office of TRUTH to "still,"—and so for other similar miracles.

The *blind* are simply blind in understanding; and the TRUTH is well compared in Scripture to light, whose presence removes the darkness of ignorance.

The *dead* are those who are dead to the TRUTH; and those, on being "touched" by the SPIRIT of TRUTH,

are restored to life,—that is, to reason and truth. That this was the sort of life to which they were restored we might suppose from the fact, that we hear no more of them, but they were left without further notice to pass through the real ‘dark valley’ which receives all mankind, the Teacher included.

The *loaves* and *fishes* symbolize doctrine, the dead letter and the living truth, as I have already intimated; and this may feed its thousands without diminution. CHRIST represents the *bread* of life, that is, the *doctrine* of life, which may be imparted to multitudes, and yet there shall remain many baskets of fragments; for no one is the poorer, but rather the richer, by what he imparts to others of the TRUTH. The qualities of wisdom are the reverse of those of worldly treasures, for they are not dissipated by use, nor by division or distribution to others. Hence CHRIST tells us to lay up treasures in heaven; that is, in wisdom, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

The miracle of tongues at Pentecost teaches, that all men are capable of understanding the Law in their own *Spirit*; which, then, is represented as speaking in their own language; that is, all men are endowed with a conscience which teaches them or commands them to obey the RIGHT,—to secure which is the object

of the written law; and when the SPIRIT of TRUTH visits or pervades a human soul, this sense of RIGHT becomes endowed with superhuman power, and sustains men through even the agonies of the cross.

The *Lame*, the *Blind*, the *Dumb*, the *Maimed*, are the morally lame, the spiritually blind, the stupidly dumb, and the ignorantly maimed, all of whom are restored by the SPIRIT of TRUTH.

We are told in sufficiently plain language, in the 13th chapter of *Matthew*, by a reference to Isaiah, the nature of the blindness and deafness which was cured by the Spirit of Truth. To say of a people that, "seeing they see not," is the same thing as saying, they see, but do not understand; as the expression, hearing they hear not, in *verse* 13, is virtually interpreted for us by the expression, "neither do they understand." In the 14th *verse*, the meaning is perfectly plain: By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. The 15th *verse* still further explains the sense, by giving a reason: that the people's heart had "waxed gross," and therefore it was, that their ears had become "dull of hearing, and their eyes, they had closed." This language is so manifestly metaphorical, that any one ought to *see* and *understand* it, whose attention is called to it. But we are so much in the habit of *hear-*

ing these verses read without stopping to think of their meaning, that we neither *understand*, nor *perceive*, their plain import.

Miracles are a species of (written) acting parables, as I have said, and were designed to teach, or illustrate, by imagery, the power of TRUTH in the soul. No man sees a thought, an affection, a passion; and so, also, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, which ought to be the LORD of these, is absolutely invisible. Hence, theologians, poets, and even philosophers, have been constrained to personify them, and have discoursed about them in parables, figures, and symbols. Therefore, whatever CHRIST is represented as doing, contrary to the order of nature, we must understand by considering that it is entirely within the order of nature, that the writers of the gospels, desiring to represent, in the person of CHRIST, the power of TRUTH in the soul of man, should figure that power in a succession of symbolic miracles.

Thus, the TRUTH enables a man to walk on the waters; that is, on the fluctuating, and often stormy waves of popular opinion. No one, having thoroughly given himself to the TRUTH, feels at the mercy of the opinions of others: he walks on the waters.

There may be a profounder meaning to this, where the "waters" are taken to signify the moveable and fluctuating character of external and visible nature, which furnishes no Ariadne's thread, to the senses, by which the soul may be guided through the dark and mysterious maze. What the senses cannot provide in this direction, the Spirit of Truth does supply to those who, in simple fidelity, have learned to rely upon it.

Many acts of JESUS, not miraculous, are also pure symbolic teaching; thus, when CHRIST is represented as washing the feet of his disciples, saying, (*John* 13: 8): If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;—the meaning is, simply, that no man has any part in TRUTH, whose externals, or whose life is not washed, or purified, by the TRUTH,—of which the ceremony of baptism itself is but a symbol.

When CHRIST is represented as catching *fish* in the SEA, by casting the net on the "right side," or teaching others to do so, we must understand by the Sea, the great ocean of TRUTH—from the depths of which it is the office of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH to draw up *fish*, that is, living *Truth*. This sort of fish is called "living water" in *John* iv: 10, 14.

In these verses of John, the *well* which *Jacob* had given, and of which he had drunk, as also his children and cattle, represents, as I have already intimated, the

written word, the *letter*; the "flesh" (*John* vi: 63) that "profiteth nothing;" that is, by itself. Whosoever drinks of this, shall thirst again (*John* iv: 13); but the *water* that CHRIST gives, is the *Spirit* of the *Letter*, the "blood" of the "flesh," that "quickeneth." Hence, Christ says, that this "living water" shall be, in those who receive it, a well of water springing up into everlasting life; for TRUTH is inexhaustible and perennial.

CHRIST, I say, represents the SPIRIT OF TRUTH; not a historical person, for it is invisible, and has never been seen as a person. As a visible person, even Christ, (the written New Testament to us), he is Jacob's well; and whosoever drinks of this water only, shall thirst again, and again, until he drinks of the *Spirit*, that is, of the unseen CHRIST. By calling this the *Spirit*, or the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, I merely give it a name; I do not define it. But it is the name that CHRIST has given it (*John* xvi: 13). This is the *Spirit* that will guide those who possess it into all TRUTH. It speaks by an authority independent of the will, and hence it is said to speak independently of man; or, by a metonymy, the man, under its influence, does not speak, of himself (*John* xvi: 13). This Spirit shall glorify CHRIST (v. 14), because it is CHRIST; and *he* shall take of *Christ's*, and show it to those who have the same

spirit (v. 15); and it shall come, and go, and come again, while man is in the flesh (v. 17): all which things, and many others, are said in proverbs (v. 25); and the object of all is, that the Soul may have peace (v. 33), the peace of God. This is the *Spirit* which, under the name of the *Comforter*, it was said, should teach all things (*John* xiv: 26), meaning, of course, all things of itself; and it was promised (same verse) that it should bring to remembrance whatever CHRIST had spoken: because, as CHRIST was set forward to speak in the SPIRIT of TRUTH, those in whom this *Spirit* lives have, within themselves, the principle from which CHRIST spake, the "living water," by which he spake: and this is a free Spirit, accessible to all who choose to drink of it. Hence, the language of *Isaiah*: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

What *wine* is here spoken of but that 'living water' of which CHRIST speaks? And this is the living *fish* drawn from the great ocean of TRUTH by those who cast the net on the right side.

In the mystical transits of which we read in the gospels (*Mark* iv: 35, v: 1, and elsewhere,) from one *side* to the *other*, and back again, we must understand

the mystical transit which a soul makes in contemplating, now the *Letter*, and now the *Spirit*; or, in a higher sense, the *world*, as it is represented, and the *world* which is represented.

As this ocean of *Truth* is the sea from whence are drawn living *fish*, I am naturally led to speak of the beautiful symbolism by which CHRIST is represented as teaching by the sea-side, *Matt.* xiii: 1, *Mark* ii: 13, iv: 1, &c., for the sea is the ocean of eternity. In the world, we may be said to be on the 'shore' of that ocean; but by a mystical passage to the "other side," the soul seems to stand in the full light of TRUTH; and then, personified, the SPIRIT of TRUTH is represented as seated in a ship, teaching a multitude upon the shore, (*Matt.* xiii: 2); but the teaching is in *parables*, (verse 3); and what are parables but *Truth* presented in similitudes? We should understand that TRUTH, in a spiritual sense, is eternal, and when it is apprehended in this highest character, it seems to carry the soul away from the things of time, and pours upon it a flood of glory; and if, in this light, it speaks, it indeed does not speak as of itself, but it speaks the words it hears from the Father; and this is what the world has agreed to call inspiration. A soul thus speaking is beautifully represented as seated in a ship in the sea, the ocean of eternity.

But *Truth* is not only a Sea, it is also a Mountain; and a holy soul is a holy mountain, a mountain of the Lord,—of which we read so much in the Scriptures. It is from this holy mount that we have received the **SERMON OF SERMONS**. But as multitudes of men, living in their sensuous nature and veiled over by the things of time, do not easily distinguish this ocean, this sea, this mountain, they are represented as ‘standing on the shore of the sea,’ or as ‘coming to the *mount*,’ to hear the words of **TRUTH** from another. We, of this age, may with humility confess ourselves to be of the multitude,—and we hear the voice of **CHRIST** as speaking from the bosom of the infinite; and what, among other things, does he say? In the very midst of his teaching (*Matt. xi: 15*) he exclaims,—He that has ears to hear let him hear: and to hear, in the Scripture, means, almost everywhere, to understand. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear, is again urged in *Matt. xiii: 9*, and in the very same chapter, to enforce the warning, it is repeated in verse 43, He that hath ears, let him hear; and again, in *Matt. xxiv: 15*, whoso readeth let him understand. We should not take this as a warning to understand a part of the gospel, but we should feel ourselves called upon again and again to understand the whole of it;—and shall we make no attempt to do so?

It was undoubtedly the opinion of the time, how far just or otherwise I will not say, that the common people could not understand the doctrine of the *Spirit*, the essential TRUTH which was taught figuratively and symbolically through CHRIST;—and hence we read of cautions, not to throw pearls to swine, and not to give the children's bread to the dogs; and we are expressly told that CHRIST spake "to the people" only in parables.

One of the reasons for this, must be explained by the supposition that the real authors, or writers, of the gospels, belonged to a (Masonic) brotherhood, the *ESSENES*, sworn to hold their doctrine of the *Spirit* a secret; though this secrecy itself must have grown out of the opinion that, to the generality of men, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH is not only invisible, but incomprehensible; and such men, it was thought, must be left in possession of their idols, the *letter*, the *water*, the *flesh*, the *bread*, as the next best thing. The *Essenes* were sworn, as I have said, not to speak of their doctrine, except among each other; and they were sworn not to write of it, except in allegory and symbolism. This is expressly stated by *Philo*; and upon this, and other statements, *Eusebius*, the ecclesiastical historian of the fourth century, gives the opinion that the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament were the secret books of the *Essenes*. His language is, speak-

ing of the brotherhood, and of their secret books: "It is highly probable, that the ancient commentaries which he [Philo] says they [the Essenes] have, are the very gospels and writings of the Apostles, and probably some expositions of the ancient prophets, such as are contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and many others of St. Paul's Epistles."

This opinion was given by Eusebius, in connection with the assumption that the Essenes were the early Christians, before having received the Christian name. To establish this assumption, the historian recites many points of similitude between the doctrines and usages of the two sects, which he thinks "irrefragible testimony" in support of his opinion—returning again and again to the proofs to remove all doubt. In one place he makes extracts from Philo "respecting those of our communion" (as he calls the Essenes), which he "deems obvious and indisputable;" and then adds: "But, should any one still be so hardy as to contradict, let him, at least, abandon his incredulity, by yielding to the more powerful demonstrations, which are to be found among none but in the religion of Christians, according to the gospel;" referring then to still further proofs.

He saw in "their meetings (the meetings of the Essenes), and the separate abodes of the men and the

women in those meetings, and the exercises performed by them," what was "still in vogue among" the Christians of his own day; referring, especially, to "the festival of our Savior's passion," which (as he says) the Essenes were "accustomed to pass in fasting and watching, and in the study of the divine word." "All these (he adds), the above-mentioned author [Philo] has accurately described and stated in his writings, and are *the same customs that are observed by us alone*, at the present day, particularly the vigils of the great festival, and the exercises in them, and the hymns that are commonly recited among us." The translator of Eusebius tells us, in a note upon this passage, that the *festival* referred to was that of Passion week, which precedes the feast of Easter.

After stating some other similitudes of practice between the Essenes, of Philo's time, and the Christians, of his own time, he adds: "Besides this, he [Philo] describes the grades of dignity among those who administer the ecclesiastical services committed to them, those of the deacons and the presidencies of the episcopate as the highest. But (he concludes), whosoever desires to have a more accurate knowledge of these things, may learn them from the history already cited; but that Philo, when he wrote these statements, *had in view the first heralds of the gospel, and the original*

practices, handed down from the Apostles, must be obvious to all."

In reading what Eusebius says of the Essenes, as described by Philo, and of the Christians of his own time, we must distinguish his testimony to the similitude of doctrine and usage between the two societies, from his opinion, that the Essenes were the early Christians, and also from his opinion that the *secret* books of the former were the *sacred* books of the latter. His testimony to the fact of the similitude, may be regarded as decisive; for the usages of the Christians of his day fell, of course, intimately under his own observation, as a Bishop.

We may consider, therefore, that the Essenes and the Christians were the same society, under different names:—and then the question arises,—did the society originate at or before the new era?

It will be very difficult to explain how the early Christians could first have originated a society under a name having no connection with their own, adopting afterwards another name.

It will be still more difficult to explain how the early Christians could have had among them men living to the age of one hundred years, within the life-time of

Josephus, as stated by him of the Essenes, when Josephus himself was born, according to received accounts, only twenty seven years after the new era, and not exceeding ten years after any possible date at which a Christian society could have been formed; for no such society can be supposed to have preceded the preaching of John the Baptist.

But it is a waste of time to dwell upon this point. No one, disposed to look at the question fairly, can fail to see that the position of Eusebius, on this point, is surrounded with insurmountable difficulties; while the supposition, that the Essenes were an old sect, or a secret society among the Jews, removes all serious historical difficulties.

The testimony of Eusebius, to the unity of the two societies, remains, I say, unquestioned; but his opinion that the Essenes were the early Christians, must give way to the inference, from historical grounds, that the Christians were derived from the Essenes. In short, the Essenes were not the early Christians, but the Christians were the later Essenes; that is, the Essenes of the time of Eusebius under a changed name, that change having been made at Antioch, where the disciples (of Truth) were first called Christians. (*Acts xi: 26.*)

But I shall show, in another place, that this name

was given to only a portion of the Essenes; that portion of them that had been added to their number from those "without," through the preaching of St. Paul and others, who had not passed into the society by the "right door;" that is, they were not thoroughly indoctrinated into the secrets of the Essenes; for those secrets cannot be adopted externally: they must be lived, internally. This opinion is precisely in harmony with the teaching of many evangelical divines of the present day, who understand very well that Christianity is a life, and not a mere formal doctrine with carefully devised ceremonies, the latter being the "flesh" of Christ; whereas it is the spirit now, as formerly, that giveth life.

The opinion of Eusebius is far from being decisive, in regard to the gospels and epistles having been the secret books of the Essenes, though the opinion itself may be entirely correct. I mean to say, the mere opinion of Eusebius would not be sufficient authority for a fact with such momentous consequences.

He was, no doubt, seduced into the expression of this opinion, by his anxiety to establish the point, that the Essenes were the Christians before receiving the latter name; but then, on the other hand, this anxiety itself grew out of the unity, visible in his time,

between the doctrines and usages of the Christians and those of the Essenes, as described by Philo and Josephus. This unity, or similitude, was so evident and striking, that the ecclesiastical historian became extremely earnest in his efforts to show that the Essenes were the Christians, reasoning this point through several pages.

The reason for this earnestness and anxiety to prove that the Essenes were the early Christians, I suppose was no other than this: that, unless this point was established, a reverse view would become unavoidable—a position which Mr. De Quincey has recently advanced in a popular essay, in which he asserts that, unless it can be shown that the Essenes were the early Christians, it must be conceded that there was no need of a revelation through Christ, as his teachings were all anticipated by the Essenes.

Mr. De Quincey has the temerity, even, to place the very existence of Christianity, as a revealed religion, upon the single point of being able to show a fraudulent substitution of the name of the *Essenes*, by Josephus, in place of that of the Christians, in his account of the doctrines of the former sect among the Jews. The possibility of some such position as this was, in

all probability, distinctly visible to Eusebius, and hence his efforts to absorb the Essenes into the Christian circle.



SECTION VI.

If the Essenes had a doctrine which they were sworn to hold as a secret, it may be asked — how can the doctrine now be known? In answer to this question, several considerations must be weighed. The whole of Philo's writings furnish matter for study in connection with this topic. He does not, indeed, disclose a secret of the Essenes, as such; but he has stated an important principle by which, as he says, they interpreted the sacred Jewish writings, regarding the letter of those writings as the body of a living animal, and the internal sense, as the soul of the animal. Now, no animal can possibly be conceived to have entered into this view, but man. The sacred books were written by men, were addressed to men, and are to be understood only by men. Hence, we must see that the soul of man holds mysteriously, in spirit, the whole of those books; and the soul of man must interpret them.

Therefore, nothing can be more simple, or more beautiful, than the idea of personifying this Soul and giving it a history, as that of a person, whose life must be made to express the invisible wisdom of the Scriptures.

The works of *Philo* will assist any one incalculably in understanding the older Scriptures, and help to prepare for a comprehension of the later writings, founded upon them; for his entire works are but little else than interpretations of the Hebrew sacred books, from what may be called a spiritual point of view—such as we may readily suppose was current among the Essenes, particularly after we have made a study of what *Philo* says of these extraordinary people.

Again: we must consider that no actual *Truth* can be confined to the members of a secret society. I do not speak of conventional signs of recognition, which the Essenes had, as the Masons now have; for these serve only for a local and a limited purpose, and may perish with it, without any loss to humanity. But no one can imagine that the truths of Euclid fall into this class. Such truths cannot be appropriated by a secret society, and be withheld from the world at large.

It is the same with what may be called spiritual Truth; and this doctrine is taught, as I consider, in the Gospel, where it is stated that JESUS stood in the midst of the disciples, "the doors being shut" (*John*

xx: 19). Let any one be shut within doors ever so closely, prison doors if you choose, and so much of TRUTH as he possesses, so much as he has appropriated in his soul, will visit him, and will say unto him, "peace be unto you."

CHRIST also teaches, that where two or three are gathered together, *in his name* (in the name of Truth), there he is in the midst of them (*Matt.* xviii: 20); and so it must be. Let two or three gather together in the sacred name of *Truth*, and the SPIRIT OF TRUTH will preside over their deliberations and studies.

This same principle is dramatically illustrated in the last chapter of *Luke*. Two disciples are represented as going to Emmaus, talking together of CHRIST (*verse* 14), and, as they "communed together and reasoned," JESUS himself drew near, and went with them (*v.* 15). But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him (*v.* 16); and so it often is: the SPIRIT OF TRUTH is with us, and "we know it not," simply because our precedent imaginations about it disfigure it; so that, when it appears, we do not recognize it—our eyes are "holden." The disciples were discoursing and communing together of CHRIST, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH; and, as Jews, they were looking for this Spirit in the Hebrew sacred books, and talking of the corruptions and abuses of the external Church—the Temple, which had been

turned into "a den of thieves;" and their hearts were oppressed with doubts, when the SPIRIT OF TRUTH rebuked them: O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken (v. 25) — assuring them that the SPIRIT OF TRUTH must suffer these things. This expresses a reflection which arose between themselves. And then, "beginning at Moses, and all the prophets," they considered, (in the Spirit of Truth in themselves, as yet unrecognized as the CHRIST, which is represented as expounding to them, in all the Scriptures), the things concerning the Spirit: and at length their "eyes were opened;" that is, their *understanding* was opened, as expressed in the 45th verse, and they recognized the Spirit that had presided over their communings, and saw that it was a heavenly Spirit. This is divine poetry.

For the truth of this interpretation, I would appeal to that class of faithful students of the Scriptures who have sat down to the study of them, conscious of doing so in the *Spirit of Truth*. This is the sole *Spirit* which can furnish that sort of evidence of the truth of the Scriptures, which the Scriptures themselves call the "witness of the Spirit." Nothing can exceed the beauty of the representation in this chapter of *Luke*, through which a prepared Spirit may see the steps by which a sense of the divine truth of the Scriptures

passes into the Soul. But this interpretation is addressed neither to unbelievers, nor to those who regard the sacred writings in the *letter* only.

But it is time to make a more definite use of the fact that the secret doctrine of the Essenes was penetrated by *St. Paul*, who was a Pharisee. This is an important point. *St. Paul*, not indoctrinated, so far as we know, in the secret of the Essenes, saw, nevertheless, that the Scriptures, in the letter, or outward sense, carried but a slight and surface meaning; and that, in order to appreciate them properly, their inward sense must be discovered. The doctrine of the *Spirit*, as underlying the *Letter*, is the essential doctrine of *St. Paul*. It is he who says that the *Letter* killeth, but that the *Spirit* giveth LIFE; and it is *St. Paul* who, addressing the Galatians, gives us the interpretation of the allegory, as he calls it, of *Abraham* and his two wives, *Sarah* and *Hagar*. That this mode of interpreting the Scriptures was common, in the early ages of Christianity, we may be sure, by the declarations of many of the Fathers of the Church, and those of the very highest repute. Thus, *Origen* warns us in this language:—That,

“ Since the Law is a shadow of good things to come, and writes sometimes of marriages and husbands and

wives; we are not to understand it of marriages of the flesh, but of the spiritual marriage between CHRIST and his *Church*. As, for instance, *Abraham* had two wives, &c. Here we ought not to confine our thoughts to carnal marriages, and their offsprings; but to extend them to the mysteries here signified. And there are almost a thousand other places in Scripture about marriages; but every place should have a divine, moral, and mystical construction put upon it. Whoever, therefore, reads the Scriptures about marriages, and understands no more by them than carnal marriages; he errs, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."

Origen was not satisfied with this declaration alone; but he adds that, "the Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written;" and he goes further, and says, that "the source of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or external part of Scripture;" and finally, as if he thought that resting in the literal sense was an immeasurable evil, he says, expressly, that "those who do so, shall not attain to the KINGDOM of God." This may very fairly be considered as an illustrative commentary upon the address to Nicodemus, *John* iii: 3.: Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. "Let us seek, therefore," says *Origen*, "for the *Spirit* and

substantial fruits of the *Word*, which are hidden and mysterious."

Origen speaks like an Essene, whether he was one or not, and virtually tells us, only in more open language, that "the *flesh* profiteth nothing," (*John* vi: 63): that, we must be born of both *water* and the *spirit*: that we must eat of the *flesh* and drink of the *blood* of the SON of MAN: that we must partake of the *bread* and the *wine*: that if we drink only of the water of Jacob's well we shall thirst again; and that we must drink of that *living* water which is the hidden and mysterious *Spirit* of the sacred writings. Who cannot see that this is the doctrine of the ancient church, whether he is able to discover the *Spirit* or not? But there is much more of this.

Origen says again, of the Scriptures: "There are some things inserted as history, which were never transacted, and which it is impossible should be transacted; and other things, again, that might possibly be done, but were not."

St. Hilary says: "There are many historical passages of the New Testament, that if they are taken literally, are contrary to sense and reason [!], and therefore there is a necessity of a mystical interpretation."

By what rule did *Origen* say, that *some* of the

Scripture relations could not by possibility be historical? By the same rule, undoubtedly, to which *St. Hilary* appeals, that of sense and reason. But sense and reason recognize only the natural *order* of providence, and whatsoever is not natural is, to sense and reason, not merely miraculous, but unnatural and impossible.

St. Augustine says: "There are hidden mysteries in the works and miracles of our SAVIOUR, which, if we incautiously and literally interpret, we shall run into errors, and make grievous blunders."

To avoid falling into these threatened errors, and grievous blunders, we must seek the *Spirit* of the gospel narrations,—the significance of the miracles and parables,—not as real histories, but as figurative and symbolical representations. This may require practice, study, and self-denial; but what progress has ever been made in any good work without these?

In conformity with these views, *Origen* interprets the marriage scene at Cana of Galilee in a spiritual sense, as designed to represent the union of the SPIRIT to the *Church*,—which turns the WATER, that is, the *letter*, into *wine*, that is, into SPIRIT.

The same interpretation, with many details, is given of this miracle, by *St. Augustine*, by *St. Theophilus* of *Antioch*, by *St. Cyril*, by *St. Theophylact*, by *St.*

Jerome, and others, as I find these fathers quoted by recent writers on this subject; for candor obliges me to say that I have not consulted the original works. But I must remark, that if human records cannot be depended upon for human knowledge, how can they be depended upon for divine knowledge?—and how many are there of us who are able to consult the Hebrew Scriptures in the language or languages in which they were written?

By the above citations from the fathers we may be certain that this mode of reading and interpreting the Scriptures is so far from being new, that it is beyond all question genuine primitive christianity; and it is so, even according to *St. Paul* himself, who is, indeed, the most earnest and emphatic asserter of it, though he referred to the Old Testament; for, according to the ablest writers on this subject, *St. Paul's Epistles* were written before the gospels, or at least they became publicly known before the gospels.

As another instance of this mode of interpretation by the fathers of the Church, before the church had declined, I will barely refer to the casting out of the money-changers from the Temple, and overthrowing "the seats of those that sold doves." Many of the Fathers, *St. Augustine*, *Origen*, and others, interpret this conduct, attributed to *JESUS*,—*Origen* insisting

strongly that there is no literal truth in the story,—as referring to the office of TRUTH, when it visits a *Church*, to cast out of it that worldly disposition which is so apt to creep into it when its spirit has degenerated into formalism. TRUTH is not an object of traffic. It can neither be sold nor bought. Now TRUTH is symbolized by a *dove*; hence CHRIST is represented as overturning the seats of those that sold *doves* in the Temple;—not that such a scene ever actually occurred, except as we may even now occasionally see something of it, when a merely professional preacher, educated to gain a livelihood by preaching the gospel, abandons a lucrative position in the external church, and becomes a preacher from a higher sense of TRUTH, accepting cheerfully whatever worldly consequences may follow in the path of a life consecrated to God.

To see the force of such interpretations as the above, we have only to understand and feel that the TRUTH is something more than a name, and is, indeed, the supreme arbiter of all the controversies in the world; a power in itself, though unseen, before which everything false recedes, as darkness yields to light. To one who contended against it, it was said: It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. Whosoever falls

upon it, shall be broken in pieces; and on whomsoever it falls, it shall grind him to powder.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, transcendently realized by the gospel writers, is personified in CHRIST; and whatever he is represented as doing in the flesh, symbolizes the power of TRUTH in the soul of man; and as TRUTH, like Virtue, is its own reward, so CHRIST is represented as the reward of those who seek him; for to seek him is to seek the Book of the Lord, as Isaiah expresses it, and this is a state of the soul, and neither a book nor a person.

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SECTION VII.

Nothing can be more simple than the principle by which these interpretations are made; but, at the same time, it must be admitted that the application of the principle requires the utmost caution and prudence. What *St. Paul* called the *Spirit* of the *Letter*, is simply the reason of it; or it is the reason why the letter was given. It may have many names. It may be said to be the *object* of the Letter; and, in some sense, it is the *cause* of it; and especially it is the TRUTH of it. A simple case will illustrate what is here intended. Let any one of the commandments of *Moses* be taken by itself; and if we can discover the *reason* of the commandment, we then understand the *Spirit* of it. For example: *Moses* gives us a commandment, that we shall not bear false witness against our neighbor. Now, if any one feels, within himself, a sufficient reason for such a command, he then under-

stands the principle which prompted it in *Moses*, and he knows the reason, that is, the *Spirit* of this Law.

The meaning of the allegory of *Abraham* and his two wives, *Hagar* and *Sarah*, and that *Hagar* preceded *Sarah*, *Ishmael* being older than *Isaac*, is determined, in the same manner, though it requires more observation and experience in life, to understand it. It signifies that, in the order of the world, the children of men are born under some Law, devised by their parents, or ancestors, for their good. This Law is represented in the allegory by a bond-woman: because, until the reason of the Law becomes known, obedience to it is arbitrarily exacted; and this obedience *St. Paul* himself calls a bondage. But the *Spirit* of the Law, that is, the reason of it, is represented by a free-woman: because, when the reason of the Law is understood, obedience to it is no longer felt as a constraint, but it is freely rendered. Hence, *St. Paul* says, that the *Spirit* is free; or where the Spirit is, there is liberty; that is, so soon as any one understands the reasonableness of a Law, the motive to obedience is found in the reason itself; and as that reason, when truly seen, is seen in or through himself, it follows that, in obeying the Law, he really obeys his own nature—and this is freedom. To be under the control, or dominion, of another, is a bondage, even

though for our good, or is felt as such, so long as the reason of the control is not realized; but, to obey one's own nature, is to be free; yet the true nature of man is not expressed in his passions, which bring many into bondage, but through the reason, for the reason is free. God himself is said to be infinite Reason, and infinitely free.

Now, God's eternal Laws, so far as they are expressed in the Scriptures, stand over us in our minority in the nature of commands; which we are required to obey, whether we understand them or not: but when we learn that these Laws express the infinite reason, and find the image of the reason in ourselves, we no longer feel constrained to obedience by an external cause, but are moved to it by an internal impulse.

Until this unity of the reason is discovered, the discovery of which constitutes the true new, or spiritual birth in man, the written commandments are first in order; but when the reason of the commands is discovered, the written commands are no longer of authority, and, like *Hagar*, they are sent into the wilderness; not because they are not good, but because a higher Law has superseded them. They were first in order over the youth, and they remain first in order so long as the youth continues immature,

and requires an external guide; but when *Isaac* is born, that is, when the *Spirit*, the reason, of the Law is born, the written commands, which had been first in order, become the last,—as this very principle is expressed in the Apocalypse.

As *Isaac* represents the *Spirit* of the Law in the allegory, he is said to figure CHRIST; but this is said, only because CHRIST himself was set forward at a later day in another allegory or symbolic history, for the purpose of teaching the same thing; for CHRIST also personifies the *Spirit* of the Law, though by this I mean to include also the prophets, or still, rather the Hebrew sacred writings.

From this view we may see that the true New Testament is not the written Canon, so called;—but that it is forever New, and now stands in the same relation to the whole Bible that CHRIST occupied with respect to the Old Testament before the New was written. The true new Testament is the SPIRIT of TRUTH, which is forever new in the world, and can never grow old and be a thing of the past. It is the same to-day as when it was declared by CHRIST or re-affirmed by *St. Paul*. We may be enlightened and assisted to freedom by writings, above all by the writings of the Sacred Scriptures; but we are made free only by the SPIRIT of TRUTH itself.

When this is rightly apprehended, there will be seen to be different stages of progress. Thus, the youth is necessarily born under the Law; that is, he is under influences, the reason of which he is not supposed to know. This Law in christian countries is expressed in the sacred volume, including both Testaments as one written whole. In process of time the youth may be supposed to advance so far in the understanding of the Law as to recognize its reasonableness,—for it has proceeded from a reason, the image, or the nature of which, he carries within himself, and which only needs to be unfolded; or, we may say, that the Law has proceeded from “holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,” that is, by a SPIRIT of TRUTH; for a Spirit of Truth is a HOLY SPIRIT.

There is another advance which some few men make, when they discover the unity of the *Spirit* or the infinite *Reason*, which precedes all written Law, and enables its possessor to say—I and my Father are One.

We are not obliged to suppose that this astonishing speech was uttered by a supernatural person. It expresses a truth which some few men in all ages of the world have more or less clearly felt,—that the life of man is not an entity separated absolutely from the eternal

Light, but that it is included, and has its proper home within it: and in moments of profound contemplation, perhaps even many men have felt as if they could almost say, I and my Father are One. It is the most profound utterance ever made by any human being, and is never made of the body, but only of the soul. It is doubtless the most difficult point to understand in christianity. Nevertheless, the principle by which it is to be understood differs in no respect from what has been already expressed. In order to understand this declaration, the soul must realize in itself a peculiar condition or state, which is difficult to describe, because it is a *unique* state, or said to be so, and is by some likened to the 'opening' of a new sense; but whether truly so or not cannot easily be decided.

The truth of the declaration which I am considering — I and my Father are One — as I have said of the laws given by *Moses*, does not lie in the mere historical fact, that a particular individual made the declaration at a certain historical time, which is now to be regarded as something of the past. It expresses an eternal and ever-present Truth. But to realize it requires certain conditions, some of which I think I see expressed in the Scriptures, though they are themselves not easily understood. One of these expressions occurs in the elliptical passage in *Matt.* xvi: 25: Whosoever will

save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.

To understand this passage of Scripture, we must consider CHRIST, not as a person, nor merely as the Spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures, personified; but as speaking in the name of the infinite Reason itself. In order to have a name for this, let it be called LIFE itself. Now, this life itself stands in antithesis to the life of man, as a phenomenal being; and the passage in question imports that, before the higher life can be entered, the lower, or phenomenal life, must be "denied." But I will not dwell upon the mode and manner of it, nor will I speculate upon the consequences of it, or attempt to show that possibly it may in some way antedate, as it were, immortality, and become a perfect victory over death.

Another condition, as I suppose, is expressed in the passage where CHRIST says to his disciples, *John* xvi: 7: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the COMFORTER will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you.

The meaning of this passage I suppose to be this: that, so long as any one sees the *Truth*, as externally presented, whether in a personal teacher, or in a writing, he does not see it in the highest sense. So long as it is recognized upon outward authority, it has not

yet received the seal of the Omnipotent. Hence, the personified TRUTH is made to declare, that the *represented Truth* must be removed, to the end that the disciple may finally perceive the self evidencing nature of TRUTH; and then he will know that, although it was taught by CHRIST, yet, his teaching it is not its highest sanction, which must be found in the *Truth* itself.

Another condition, as I suppose, is expressed in the passage where CHRIST says, *John* viii: 28: When ye have lifted up the SON OF MAN, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and that I do nothing of myself; but, as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

The necessity for this was symbolized by *Moses*, as alluded to in *John* iii: 14, 15: And as *Moses* lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the SON OF MAN be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

This is repeated again in *John* xii: 32: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all you unto me.

The meaning of these several passages I suppose to be the same, to wit: CHRIST represents a certain LIFE-SPIRIT, which, truly, is in all men, and in GOD. In order that it may exert its unencumbered influence upon man, he must not merely recognize it in himself, as his own life, but must refer it to GOD as its true life; that is, it must be "exalted" in the man who real-

izes it; and when this Spirit is so exalted, its nature is, in some indefinable or mystical manner, to "draw" the whole man unto it. That the "exalted" SON OF MAN should draw all men unto him means, I say, that the single principle of TRUTH, when recognized in and for itself, tends, of its own nature, to draw upwards to itself all of the other principles of the spiritual man; that is, they are easily drawn into a willing obedience to, or harmony with the supreme principle in man, whose unity with GOD is now supposed to be recognized.

A realization of this unity is possible, as I suppose, under a variety of conditions, or rather through a variety of channels. In the gospel of John, the language expressing it is twice used: I and my Father are One; first in the 10th chapter, without explanation; and then, again, in the 17th chapter, with such an amplification as shows that the disciples could share it. As it appears in the gospel, I suppose we may say that the language expresses a vision of it through the moral sense. But it is undoubtedly accessible to many men of high art; especially to poets, though I do not include in this class mere versifiers. I consider the author of the fourth gospel, the greatest poet the world has ever seen. To realize the amazing speech under consideration, it is necessary, no doubt, that the nou-

menal nature of man should predominate over the phenomenal; in which condition the limitations imposed by the latter seem to fall away, and the soul contemplates the infinite and the eternal as from its own center. The soul, in this state, may use the language attributed to St. Paul, in *Acts* xvii: 28: In him we live, and move, and have our being; for this declaration differs in no respect from that in *John*, except in the form of words used to express it: I and my Father are One. The same sense is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians, iv: 6, where *St. Paul* speaks of — One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and [yet] in you all. In determining the sense of such declarations, we must look beyond the phraseology used to express them, and seek the truth contained in them.

The unity in question is not only seen through the moral and æsthetic sense, but through the intellectual intuitions also; and is especially accessible to men of science. I do not mean mere reasoners, who are often cavillers, and who rank among men of true science, as a mere versifier is related to a poet.

A scientific spirit may, at first, have its eyes "holden" — like the disciples going to Emmaus. Such a spirit commences, perhaps, the study of geometry, and sees nothing particularly divine in it. But as it

passes onward, and begins to discover the principles of science in itself, *in the soul*, and to recognize these again in the elements of nature, from which we have the sciences of hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics, &c., and discovers the same science in the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies, it finally recognizes but one science, which is above all, through all, and in all; and, perhaps, amazed at the discovery, such a soul exclaims, with fear and trembling, but, at the same time, with a "solemn joy:" I and my Father are One.

But the very same truth appears no less in the legal profession. Here also the eyes of the student may for a long time perhaps be "holden," while he laboriously turns the pages of whole volumes of statutory laws: but, finally, if he has a true "call" to the profession, he begins to discern a principle in the enactments of the Legislators of the world; and at length, in the seeming chaos of what is called the common law, the same principle is seen to have presided over the decisions of the higher courts; and then, also, with a trembling delight, the true jurist loses his individuality in what he recognizes as the perfection of Reason, and is ready to exclaim, I and my Father are One.

At length, in this direction, we discover in what sense a great Artist of our own age, but recently passed away, has left his judgment on record in these

remarkable words:—For the narrow mind, whatever he attempts is still a trade; for the higher an art; and the highest, in doing one thing, does all; or, to speak less paradoxically, in the one thing which he does rightly, he sees the likeness of all that is done rightly.

I might here insist upon the power of music, or harmony in the soul, to awaken a sense of the universal harmony, which is no other than the same spirit of truth; which, it may be, the man of science sees through the intellect, and calls God a Geometrician, while the jurist sees the spirit through the law, and calls Him the perfection of Reason:—though the discovery which is most universal, and comes latest in life, is to see in all of these directions but one and the same spirit; which, by this very universality, loses its specific name, and the soul that finds it, joyfully loses itself,—feeling itself swallowed up in the glory of God.

It is possible that some experience assimilated to this may explain St. Paul's feelings, as expressed in the first verses of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians; where we read that he counted all things as loss, which could by possibility disturb or impair his fruition or possession of Christ Jesus. When the Truth is pre-eminently realized, it inspires

a love for itself to which no ordinary human affection bears any comparison. In this Truth the soul sees its true good; and loves it, not because it is good, but because it is divine. The Truth thus seen, sanctifies whatever it is seen in connection with; and this is the reason why so many look upon the Scriptures as divine. This divine Truth shines in the Scriptures; or, as some have said, it burns in the sacred writings like the fire in the bush at the Holy Mount, without consuming them.

In this third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians we may see the true sense in which St. Paul uses the word *Flesh*, and although this point has been already discussed, it may be again briefly adverted to. I have shown that by *Christ in the flesh*, as used in 2 Cor. v: 16, St. Paul referred to the Law and ceremonies of the Old Testament. In this third chapter of Philippians, verse 3, we read:—For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the *flesh*.

The Apostle has already told us that;—he is a Jew that is one inwardly; and (that) circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God, *Rom. ii: 29*. Here, in this Epistle to the Philippians, we see the same

principle; that those are of the circumcision, that is, Jews indeed, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the *flesh*;—manifestly meaning Christ in the flesh, as this expression is used in 2 *Cor.* v: 16.

Then follow several passages which make it absolutely certain, that, by the *flesh*, St. Paul referred to the Jewish Law, or what he calls elsewhere the *letter*, which he says killeth; to wit: Though I might also have confidence [that is, hope,] in the *flesh*. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the *flesh*, I more: [for, as he says, he was,] circumcised the eighth day, [was] of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; [and] as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; [and as] touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. Verses 4, 5, and 6.

Here we have what St. Paul considered the *flesh*, very minutely defined; so minutely that there can be no doubt about it.

But, if being circumcised on the eighth day, and being in all other respects a Jew, according to the Law, is the *flesh*, that is, the Body of Christ, what can we suppose to be the Spirit of Christ, but the Spirit or Life of the Law; precisely as I have defined it to be?

St. Paul refers to his having persecuted the Church, as among the *virtues* of the *letter* : and doubtless he came to see in this, that the letter killeth, it having plunged him into crime ; while yet the true spirit of the letter freed him from that crime, for which he obtained "pardon," as he says, because he "did it ignorantly in unbelief," 1 *Tim.* i: 13.

St. Peter, in his second Epistle iii: 16, refers to St. Paul's Epistles as containing "some things hard to be understood;" but, admitting this, we are only required to be so much the more on our guard, against interpretations in violation of "sense and reason." If we cannot extract the sense by honest study, how can we hope to find it by abandoning ourselves to a blind faith? And, in what, or in whom shall we have faith? In the Epistles, without understanding them? This would be very absurd. Shall we then receive the interpretation of others? But who does not see that this submission is not to God, but to man; and that we must be exposed to the hazard of falling under the direction of a blind guide, with the chance, if not the certainty of falling into the ditch. *Matt.* xv: 14.

St. Paul's having been seduced into a persecution of the Church by a blind zeal for the *letter* and the "traditions of men," must have been the ground upon which he warned the Colossians:—Beware lest any

man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the *tradition of men*, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, *Col.* ii: 8. We pay St. Paul a very poor compliment by supposing, as many suppose, that he aimed a blow, in this and other similar passages, against philosophy or the use of reason. He would have denied indeed the validity of a pretended or *vain* philosophy which should deny the Spirit of Truth as it had been revealed in himself, and which he had preached so clearly that it was known to others by the same seal of certainty, by which it was known to himself; that is, it was known to others with such self-evidence that they received it, not as the word of men, (that is, not as a tradition), but as it is in truth, the word of God, 1 *Thes.* ii: 13. Here the word of God means Christ, as used in *Colos.* ii: 8, where it means the Truth, independently of the "traditions of men:" and shall we not 'beware' of traditions also?

What St. Paul meant by philosophy and vain deceit, is very plainly seen in his 1st Epistle to Timothy, chapter 1, where he says: Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith; and then we read:

5. Now the end of the commandment is charity out

of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith [sincerity ?] unfeigned :

6. From which some, having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling ;

7. Desiring to be teachers of the law ; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

8. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully ;

9. Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient.

St. Paul knew very well that the true genealogy of Christ was not to be traced through a physical line of descent from David, or from Abraham, although two of the gospels are disfigured by genealogies. The true descendants of Abraham are those who inherit his faith ; not those of his blood. Hence, we see what St. Paul deprecated, as "vain jangling:" it was not philosophy, but verbal disputings about traditions, or, in one word, about the *letter*. He again and again refers to the same thing. In his epistle to Titus, *chap.* iii : 9, he warns him to avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law ; for they are unprofitable and vain. Here is no warfare against philosophy, but a strong protest against being entangled in useless questions about traditions, and what, in chapter 1, verse 14, in this same Epistle to Titus, he

calls Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Notwithstanding my repeated reference to what I call the representative character of CHRIST, the point I am aiming at in all this, is not a denial of the historical, except in behalf of the doctrine of an unalterable providence, or order, in the course of the world; but my desire is to set forth what is called the spiritual, though I dislike this word, because of its indefiniteness. The word *Spirit* is used in a multitude of ways in the Scriptures; so many, that it would require a whole page, or more, to enumerate them. We read of the Spirit of Christ, and of the Spirit of antichrist; of the Spirit of adoption, of bondage, of burning, of divination, of wisdom, &c., &c., &c.

In view of these various forms of using the word *Spirit*, who shall undertake to define it? In many of the expressions, it is plain that *Spirit* is a mere synonym for the thing of which it is spoken. Thus, the *Spirit* of wisdom is wisdom itself: and so we may say that the *Spirit* of Truth is Truth itself, unless we say that the Love of Truth is the Spirit of Truth, for Love is a *Spirit*; and then the love of the world will define the Spirit of the world: and now, in these two expressions, the love of the world and the love of the Truth,

I think I see the ADAM and the CHRIST which every man carries within him. To find the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, and to love it, seems to me to be what is meant by the love of CHRIST; not a person of the past, but an ever-present *Spirit*, called by CHRIST himself the SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

This Spirit, which was in Christ, was also, as St. Paul claims, in St. Paul himself; and could be received by others, and become in them the hope of glory, *Col. i: 27*: and as many as were led by this Spirit, were the sons of God, *Rom. viii: 14*; by which we may understand that Christ, as a person, was not the only son of God; but, he was that only Son, because the Spirit in him had been pre-eminently manifested; that Spirit, which St. Paul called the Son of God in himself, and in all those who received or were led by the same Spirit in themselves.

The importance of this question does not lie in the fact, that a person appeared with this Spirit in Jerusalem, at a particular time, and was put to death by the Priesthood and Pharisees of the Jewish superstition; but it lies in the reality of the Spirit itself, the existence of which is the prior condition by which alone it is possible for any man to possess it. This Spirit is seen in the Scriptures; and, then, many suppose it is because of the Scriptures; whereas, others see in the

them a fruit of this Spirit. And it is the same with regard to Christ, as a person: some see the Spirit in him, while others see him in the Spirit. Let this distinction be once clearly understood, and it will remove many difficulties in studying the Scriptures.

In reading St. Paul's Epistles, I cannot but be struck with one reflection, which we, in this age of freedom from oppressive ceremonies, ought to make. St. Paul saw no small portion of the value of his freedom (in the spirit), in the relief it gave him from the burdensome ceremonies of the Jewish law. The whole of this law was typical, and expressed a truth indeed; but to see the truth only as the law, was a bondage. The sacrifice, for example, of certain animals, was typical of the sacrifice of bad passions. To see this only as a ceremony, was to lose both the beauty and the benefit of it; but to see the truth in the type, was both to realize the benefit, and be free from the bondage of the external law also. This, in view of the whole law, which was very complicated, was a matter of immense importance. But, in our age, and in some countries, there is no such oppressive external law, from which man cries for relief.

In our time, on the contrary, in some portions of christendom, the preaching of the word of God is free;

and we see the spirit of the word manifesting itself through preachers of all denominations; toleration being a sign of the Spirit, while intolerance is a sure mark of its absence. To feel the truth, is necessarily to feel a wish that others might share it; but it excludes the disposition to use violence upon the faith of others. True faith speaks in the language of St. Paul to Philemon—"without the mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly." We ought not to forget that St. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for forming a party around his name. This only means that the truth lives in itself, and should not be preached as resting upon authority.

I have said that I do not find any specific statement, in St. Paul's Epistles, of the doctrine which he repeatedly refers to as *his* gospel, calling it a mystery which had been hid from the sons of men from the beginning of the world. We are too apt to imagine that we have this *mystery* fully explained in the written gospels contained in the recognized canon, without considering that, according to the received chronology, the Epistles of St. Paul were written before the four gospels in the canon. St. Paul, in what he says of *his* gospel, did not refer to either of the four gospels in our

possession, as they were not before him when he wrote. His gospel, I repeat, is an unexplained "mystery." His Epistles, it is true, are full of earnest exhortations to a righteous life. All of this is very well and very admirable; but there is no mystery in it. He refers repeatedly to his teaching, as if he had orally explained something of which we find no clear statement in his Epistles.

That St. Paul has referred to *his* gospel as a mystery is certain, and that he has not explained it openly in his Epistles is equally certain. He tells us that he spoke (of it) privately in Jerusalem "to them which were of reputation," lest by any means he should "run in vain," *Gal.* ii: 2: and we can hardly suppose that he has written openly in his Epistles that which he found it expedient to speak of privately to men of reputation in Jerusalem. It is important to weigh these considerations well, because of the variety of ways in which St. Paul refers to *his* mystery. Possibly his calling himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews, in his Epistle to the Philippians, iii: 5, might lead to some explanation of his position towards his mystery and towards that class of Jews; for the *Hebrews*, technically understood, were not the *nation* or the whole people of the Jews, as is very plain by the whole tenor of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Many scholars

are decidedly of the opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by St. Paul. Who were those Hebrews among the Jews? This is an important question, in view of the first verse of the third chapter. But I do not propose to examine it, and have only alluded to it in connection with my reference to the doctrine of St. Paul, because in this Epistle also the allusion to Christ Jesus is in like manner mysterious, and very far from being an open, plain statement. Why was this? We shall never understand it by regarding the sacred histories of Moses and Christ from a merely literal point of view. Moses is the Law, of which Christ is the Spirit; and both are illustrated in the life of man; and perhaps, with open eyes, we may see them both before us at this day as plainly as St. Paul saw his mystery, which he said was hid only from those that were lost, 2 *Cor.* iv: 3.

SECTION VIII.

I will now return to the Old Testament, and will point out a single element of its *Truth*, having already explained the signification of the allegory of *Abraham* and his two wives. As the hint for the explanation of this allegory is found in *St. Paul*, so do I find another most important hint in the writings of the same Apostle.

The passages I shall now cite must be considered in view of, or under the light of the principle that the *Spirit* of the Law is not a thing of the past, but an ever-living present *Spirit*.

I refer to *Deut. xxx: 11-14*, to wit:

11. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?

13. Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

14. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

In the 10th chapter of Romans, we have *St. Paul's* interpretation of the above, in these words:

Verse 4. For CHRIST is the end of the Law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.

5. For *Moses* describeth the righteousness, which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, [explains *St. Paul*], to bring down CHRIST *from above* :)

7. Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, [explains *St. Paul*], to bring up CHRIST again from the dead.)

8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.

Here we see, that CHRIST is called the end of the Law; and I would have this declaration compared with *Gal. iii: 24*, where the Law is likened to a schoolmas-

ter, to bring us unto CHRIST; with the addition, that, after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (v. 25). For we must discover what it was that *St. Paul* considered as giving him the freedom he preached. We see, already, that *faith* is a synonym for CHRIST, and this is again and again called the *Spirit*, that frees those who have it from what *St. Paul* called the bondage of the law.

Now, the *Spirit* here referred to is especially pointed out in the 3d chapter of the 2d Epistle to the *Corinthians*, as a writing (v. 3) not with ink, but with the *Spirit* of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. It is of this Spirit that *St. Paul* calls himself the minister — a minister of the New Testament [the gospel, not yet written]; not of the letter, but of the *Spirit*: for the *letter* killeth, but the *Spirit* giveth life (*verse* 6).

Having this *Spirit*, *St. Paul* assumes to "use great plainness of speech" (v. 12), and not as *Moses*, which put a veil over his face (v. 13). That is, *Moses*, according to *St. Paul*, wrote in figures and symbols; for here is the veil spoken of. This veil he himself figuratively puts over the hearts of the Jews. Their minds were blinded, he says, for until this day (v. 14) remaineth the same veil untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament: and then he adds that, the veil is done

away in CHRIST. 'But he is manifestly not speaking of a personal CHRIST, for he now says, referring to the Jews:

Verse 15. But even unto this day, when *Moses* is read, the veil is upon their heart.

16. Nevertheless, when it [the heart] shall turn to the LORD, the veil shall be taken away.

And then he adds the important explanation, as the key to the whole doctrine, *v.* 17: Now the LORD is that SPIRIT: and where the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there is Liberty.

Now, this *Spirit*, of which *St. Paul* speaks, he has described as writing the Law on the fleshy tables of the heart; and thus, when the heart looks upon it, and reads what is written there, the veil over the face, that is, over the writings of *Moses*, is taken away. This *Spirit* he calls the LORD, that is, CHRIST in the *Spirit*, or the SPIRIT OF CHRIST; and he interprets *Moses*, as we see in the *Epistle to the Romans*, as referring to the same CHRIST, as being in the hearts, even of those to whom he nevertheless gave a written Law.

It is plain, therefore, that *St. Paul* looked upon the heart as the seat of CHRIST—as the place where he is to be found, and not in a person, much less in a writing. It is true, he speaks of a person in other portions of his writings: but he tells us, also, of babes in

the faith, unable to bear strong meat; he confesses that he made himself all things to all men, in order to gain some to God. He tells us, that he speaks after the manner of men, because of their infirmities, &c. It is no fault of ours, in modern times, if we find in St. Paul's writings some varieties that cannot readily be harmonized. But to return to the Law.

In Exodus, *chap.* xxiii, there are many commands about entering the Land of promise, in all of which there is nothing but pure symbolism, having reference to the moral and spiritual well-being of man, who is in Scripture often called the earth, the land, the world, Jerusalem, &c. This is the Land that is sometimes said to be *parched*, and sometimes *clothed* with fresh verdure,—according to the state of the soul. It contains many mountains, including Mount Sinai, and what is much more, it contains the Holy Mount,—the very seat of the Law in the Heart which *St. Paul* calls CHRIST.

But here, in the 23d *chapter of Exodus*, the same *Spirit*, the law in the heart, is called an ANGEL.

Verse 20. Behold, I send an *Angel* before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place

[this was not a geographical place] which I have prepared.

21. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. [That is, God's name; for *Moses* speaks in the name of God.]

22. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; [in or through the *Angel*] then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

If we can bring ourselves to look with a very small share of reasonable freedom upon those ancient writings, and if we consider such passages as the above as addressed to us—and if not addressed to us, what have we to do with them?—then, I do not see how we can fail to see in the *Angel* here spoken of, the *Law* in the heart appealed to by *Moses* in the 30th *ch. of Deut.*, which *Law* we should remember *St. Paul* calls *CHRIST, Romans x.*

I will now venture upon the one promise, which ever has deluded, and is likely still to delude those who rest in the letter, and do not see that a genuine prophecy is both prospective and retrospective, and does not refer to an event in time, but to a principle operative

throughout all time. The promise of the coming of CHRIST is not the promise of a historical person, but a promise which is now in fulfillment, as it was, indeed, before *Abraham*.

It is true that several prophecies are appealed to, as fulfilled in the person of CHRIST; but the writers of the gospels, whom I suppose to have been Essenes, expressly designed to figure in CHRIST the life or soul of the sacred Scriptures; and it was therefore within their design to represent him as the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Hence the writers frequently say—this was done, that such or such a Scripture might be fulfilled: but this was precisely what they set out to represent. As the ‘Holy One of Israel’ is indeed the principal subject of the Old Testament, CHRIST is appropriately made to say, *John v: 39*—Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. This is only a mode by which a mythical person is made to indicate his representative character, and that he represents the *Spirit* of the Scriptures, which, because it is a *Spirit* has never been physically visible in the world, except indeed as all men are images of it, who live according to the SPIRIT of TRUTH. Hence, a recent writer very truly and beautifully says, that the life of every truly good man is an *Evangel*.

The so-called prophecy, to which I will now refer, is in *Deut.* xviii: 15, to wit:—

The LORD thy GOD will raise up unto thee a *Prophet* from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

Many, who have not been disposed to regard CHRIST as sufficiently like unto *Moses* to be the promised *prophet*, have urged that this prophecy was fulfilled in *Joshua*. But, in truth, neither *Joshua* nor *Christ*, as historical persons, were like unto *Moses*; but if we look upon *Moses* as a Law-giver, founding his Laws upon the principle of all moral Law in the heart, the *Spirit* that *St. Paul* calls CHRIST, we shall easily understand the meaning of this promise of a *Prophet* like unto *Moses*. It is simply a prophetic declaration for all time, that in all men there shall arise a principle of Truth in the heart; the “brethren” spoken of being the entire family of the spiritual nature of man, including the thoughts, affections, and passions of the whole man, in the ‘midst’ of which, or whom, there is a certain *Spirit of Truth* which should rule with the authority of GOD. This is the “Angel” (*Ex.* xxiii: 20), whose voice is to be obeyed because God’s “name” is in him; and this is also the word in the heart (*Deut.* xxx: 14,) which *St. Paul* calls CHRIST,

(*Rom. x: 6, 7*) and which he also calls the *Spirit* that writes the Law on the heart, (*2 Cor. iii.*)

Now this *Spirit*, this CHRIST, is the soul or life of the sacred Scriptures, personified by the Essenes as teaching the doctrine of the *Spirit*, as the grand secret of the *brotherhood* who were schooled in this doctrine, but who were, at the same time, under the most solemn oath not to speak or write of it openly.

Here we must see the reason of the *veil* over the New Testament, or over the gospels (and the revelation); for the gospels are grand parables, containing many subordinate parables, in the form of miracles, and other representations. But *St. Paul* was a convert from among the Pharisees, and discovered the truth of the *Spirit* (under the Letter), not by the teaching of man, and was astonishingly awakened into life by the discovery, through what has been generally regarded as an inspiration: a word of indefinite signification; for all clear and distinct conceptions of *Truth* come under this name. No one perceives the truth, even of a geometric relation, but by what may be called an inspiration. It is not of the will of man that progress is made in scientific discoveries, but these are all developments of *Truth* in the soul, the great Ocean whence living fish are drawn.

OF TRUTH.

As I have so much to say of *Truth*, I may as well declare, in a few words, that I recognize, in common with many others, two kinds of Truth; one, which carries with itself its own evidence of itself. This is the Truth I am chiefly concerned with; for this is the rock on which a true religion is built, and which the gates of hell, whatever they are, shall not prevail against. Another kind of Truth admits only of what is sometimes called empiric evidence; and this includes all historical relations, which are always more or less open to question and discussion. One of these classes of Truths is referred to the reason, and the other to the understanding; and, however difficult it may be to define their respective limits, the two classes may generally be distinguished, though, in fact, ultimately, in the highest Truth, the two combine; for Truth, in itself, is an absolute unity, or, it may better be expressed by saying that Truth is always in harmony with itself.

Some idea of these two kinds of Truth, or rather of knowledge, and of their unity also, may be seen in the following simple example, or illustration:

A geometrician knows, by a process proceeding from intuition, that the three angles of every plain triangle are equal to the two right-angles. The truth of this

he cannot doubt, if he would; nor is it possible for any one to infuse a doubt about it into his mind. With regard to the truth of this proposition, there is no debateable ground left in the mind of a man of science, and yet he may never have measured the angles of any one triangle whatever. This, then, is a Truth of the reason.

But now, one who is not acquainted with the processes of a geometric mind, may approximate this sort of knowledge empirically, or experimentally, by means of mathematical instruments; that is, he may measure one, two, three, or thirty triangles, and finding that every variety, when measured, shows a similar result, he may infer the principle, that the three angles of every possible triangle are equal to two right-angles; but, from nature of the evidence in this case, it is impossible for any one absolutely to know, beyond a peradventure, but that there may be some one triangle, not yet experimented upon, which might measure, either more or less than two right-angles.

The difference between these two kinds of cognition, or knowing, is seen everywhere among men, in almost every branch of knowledge. One man *knows*, when he affirms anything, while another only "opines" about it.

That these two kinds of knowledge ultimately unite,

or tend to unity, is known only to the reason:—the understanding, as it is called, never attains to it. The unity of science with experimental knowledge, or with facts to be sensuously observed, has never been more remarkably declared than by *Plato* in the *Laws*, where he asserts the unity of science, or intellect, with the motions of the heavenly bodies in the solar system, which had not yet, in his day, been brought within the field of science. The passage is so remarkable that I will recite it. It is a portion of an argument in proof of the existence of God:

“If the whole path of heaven, and at the same time the progressive movement of all it contains, possess a nature similar to the motion, and circulation, and reasonings of the mind, and proceed in a manner allied to them [this being implied in the argument], it is evident that we must say, that the most excellent Soul [God] takes care of the whole world, and leads it along a path of that very kind.”

Plato saw the *unity* of the noumenon and the phenomenon, but he did not know at what period in the history of learning this unity would appear in the science of astronomy. How would he have rejoiced, if he could have seen science, as in our day, entering into mineralogy, and even into botany, and showing, in the most astonishing details, that God’s infinite reason

presides, indeed, over the fabrication of every crystal, and no less in the unfolding of the very leaves and the blossoms of the lily! He would have recognized a clear and distinct meaning in the words, *Matt. x: 29*: Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

The difference between the influences of the two kinds of knowledge referred to, upon different men, is remarkable; for it is not usual for one who takes reason for his stand-point, to enter with heat and zeal into controversies; because, upon knowledge attained empirically, or that which admits of empirical evidence only, he knows in advance, that a sediment of doubt always remains after the most careful examination; as in nearly all historical questions: while, on questions whose solution comes within the pale of reason, he knows, no less in advance, that in the end reason must, of necessity, decide the controversy. Not so with the empiric man. His empiric conviction takes the place, in his mind, of a conviction of reason, and he does not understand why that which seems so certain to him, is not equally certain to all other men; and he hopes to make it so by the force of earnest asseverations; while the real truth, in both cases, is one immutable thing, in no wise affected by the misunderstandings of men. But to return to my subject.

SECTION IX.

If we consider CHRIST as personating the SPIRIT, *life, soul, reason, or wisdom* of the sacred Scriptures among the Jews, and attend to his teaching, we may understand something of the secret wisdom of the Essenes: but we ought not to suppose that this can be easily done, for they were the spiritual portion of the Jews, living in seclusion and leading a contemplative and studious life, under the most strict discipline of prayer and worship. These were the sages of the nation; grave men, experienced in thought and in life. They were the "brethren" so often referred to in the New Testament, and who were no doubt pointed at in *Matt. xviii: 17*;—tell it to the Church; for, except the Jewish Church, to which CHRIST would not have appealed, we know of no other church where these words were used, save that of the Essenes.

Now CHRIST, from this point of view, may be recog-

nized as teaching *the doctrine of himself*, the doctrine of the Holy One of Israel; that is, the doctrine of the Law in the heart, the true CHRIST, as *St. Paul* calls the SPIRIT:—But this is the KINGDOM OF GOD. And here we may understand the parable, comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to *a treasure hid in a field*; for this is the one thing needful, the Law in the heart; the field being ourselves: and to possess a “right spirit” in the heart is of so much importance as to outweigh all else that “a man may have.” *Matt. xiii: 44.*

But whether we speak of a right spirit in the heart, or of a right heart, we mean the same thing.

The Kingdom of Heaven is also compared to a *goodly pearl of great price*,—in order to purchase which, a merchant “sold all that he had.” Now this pearl is the *treasure* hid in the field again;—a *right* spirit, a spirit of *rectitude*; that is, of righteousness: for righteousness and CHRIST are one and the same,—a spirit of life, or of living, and not a person in the past. The Kingdom of Heaven is compared, again, to *leaven* hid in three measures of meal. Why *three* measures? Here we may see an allusion to the triple nature of man, body, soul, and spirit, (which is also figured on the cross). Truth is the *leaven* which works and works in the three measures of meal, until

the whole man is brought to the Truth, and sees nothing in the universe so majestic,—nothing so lovely, and nothing so holy.

Heaven is also compared to a *grain of mustard seed*, the smallest of seeds; and it is represented as a growth. *St. Paul* speaks of it as a growth. He tells us of CHRIST being “formed” in us; of babes in the faith; of those who can bear milk only and not strong meat:—he tells us also of an *heir*, who has his period of minority, though born to be the Lord of all; *Gal.* iv: 1, and other places.

If we ask now what that Spirit is, specifically, which *St. Paul* called CHRIST or the LORD, we must examine the *field* where the *treasure* was hid; and we must seek the *pearl* in that *field*; and we must find it with the *leaven* and the *mustard seed*, for these are only other names for it, or of characteristics of it.

And what is more, we must understand also, that this *treasure*, this *pearl*, this *leaven*, this *mustard seed*, is the *Angel* spoken of in *Ex.* xxiii: 20; and it is the *prophet* promised in *Deut.* xviii: 15; and it is no less the *Law in the heart* of which *Moses* speaks in *Deut.* xxx: 14: and this is what *St. Paul* calls CHRIST, *Rom.* x: 6, 7, which he also calls the *Spirit* that

writes the Law in the heart, and says, 2 *Cor.* iii: 17. Now, the LORD is that SPIRIT.

Nothing can be more evident from all this, than that the *Spirit*, which is the subject of all these allusions, is not only some one thing, but that the *Spirit*, to which so much importance attaches, is something proper to the nature of man, or which he is capable of receiving. And this *Spirit* must be of such a nature as to be entitled to pre-eminence among all of its spiritual 'brethren,'—all of the thoughts, affections, passions, &c., of which man is capable; for these are the 'brethren' among which is to arise the 'prophet,' the 'Angel,' whose 'voice' is to be 'obeyed' because God's 'name' is in him; and by God's name, we are to understand his authority.

At this point or stage of the inquiry we must not forget the important declaration of Christ, recorded in *Luke* xvii: 20, 21,—the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you. In vain, then, shall we look for it beyond ourselves.

In attempting to determine specifically what this *Spirit* is, there may be a difficulty analogous perhaps to that of the physiologist in designating in the physi-

ological structure of man any one organ whose function is entitled to predominate over all other organs. This difficulty in physiology arises from the fact, that the organs are so connected together and mutually interdependent upon each other, that if any one is deranged, all of the rest are liable to be disordered; but, on the other hand, if any one is perfect, and can be maintained in its integrity, the whole system may be accommodated to it. Something [similar to this may be said of the moral and spiritual organization of man.

Admitting this difficulty to the fullest extent, yet, as a physician may feel tolerably sure of the health of his subject, if he can maintain an equable, or normal action, say, of the heart, so, in the moral system, the Therapeut (St. [Luke probably being one, and thence called a physician) may feel no less sure of the welfare of his moral subject, if he can be certain of a right action of the heart in a moral sense; although it must be admitted, at the same time, that the heart may not be right if the head is wandering, and no less admitted that if the head be right, the heart will not go astray.

After considering all of the difficulties in the case, I find myself disposed to point to one thing which, if not entitled, of itself, to pre-eminence in the moral subject, is of such a nature that it cannot be neglected without

manifest danger to the whole system; and this, therefore, I would select as so far coming to the surface that it admits of being named: and if it is not the prophet, the angel, itself, yet it may serve as an index pointing the way to it.

Now, this principle can be no other than that which is popularly known under the name of the CONSCIENCE; the importance of which, in the spiritual constitution of man, cannot be over-estimated; though its perfect action may require a right action of the reason also, the true *Spirit* being, perhaps, the harmonious action of both: a phraseology easily used, the meaning of which, however, has never been defined. Still, I repeat, that if I felt required to name one thing as the proper *Spirit* to commence with, in seeking that perfection of man, which has been the object of all the professed revelations that have ever been made in the world, I should undoubtedly select the CONSCIENCE, as being known to all men, and accessible to all well-disposed men; whereas, what we call reason, "is always the acquisition of a few." Experienced life always looks upon a conscientious youth with approbation and hope, whereas the want of a *spirit* of rectitude is full of fear and danger. We know, for we may easily see, that this *spirit* is often manifested in children even before the power of speech is acquired, and hence it

has been called the first-born among many brethren. We know, also, that it never wholly leaves any man while life lasts, and is often the sole element to be distinguished in the agonies of death. This principle is the sole authority for the golden rule, as it is called, requiring us to do unto others as we would that others should do unto us; that is, it affirms the Law of equal justice, without regard to persons. Its modes of action are yet infinitely various; now approving, now condemning, yet always one thing in itself, affirming the everlasting Truth: in principle always right; in practice often wandering, until instructed by experience and made perfect through trial, and often through affliction: when, finally, men are no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but they speak the truth in love, and grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ: *Ephes.* iv: 14, 15.

Why do we generally look upon conscientious members of the church with regard, confidence and trust? It is not simply because they are members of this or that church, or of this or that denomination, but it is because membership implies conscientiousness. The conscience, as such, does not carry a man into com-

munion with any particular denomination. If it did, there would be but one denomination in the world. On the other hand, no one, except a wolf in sheep's clothing, can join in any communion whatever, except under the sanction, or impulse of the conscience. Whatever other feeling, or principle, may be present in the decision any one makes on this question, the question of uniting with a society of God's worshippers, a dictate of the conscience is indispensable, otherwise there is not only no real membership, but the intruder, perhaps, literally drinks damnation to his soul. But there are so many "unworthy" members, that the mere fact of membership alone is not always taken as decisive evidence of fidelity; and therefore it is that, in the current intercourse of the world, men look to life, and not profession, for evidence of a trustworthy character. "By their fruits shall ye know them."

We may test the value of this principle, the Conscience, after the manner by which Cicero proposed to ascertain the best system among the ancient sects of philosophy. Every sect placed its own system first; but the second choice of almost every sect was the Academic; which, therefore, in all probability, was the Best of all. Now, it is certain that whatever princi-

ple any sect, of either philosophy or religion, set forward prominently as "most surely" to be depended upon, there is not one of them that can dispense with the Conscience.

Not only do we see that no system of either religion or philosophy, where these are systematized at all, can dispense with the conscience as a principle of order; but it is worthy of especial remark, that whenever writers on moral and religious subjects, momentarily forget their denominational connections, they immediately give evidence of their recognition of the law in the heart, of which I have been speaking. Even when writing with a technical eye upon some dogmatic system, they often speak of a DUTY, known to be such by a decision of the Conscience, as a duty to CHRIST or to GOD; without apparently seeing that the prophets said no more, and had no other ground for what they did say, on questions of duty. In the same manner, they use a variety of expressions, which, in reality, mean the same thing; such as *obligation, responsibility, consciousness of rectitude, righteousness*; or, they talk of the *sacred fact of obligation*, or, *the sanctity of God's holy law*, &c.; all of which expressions have their root in the conscience, and no where else.

St. Paul saw the whole law in love to man, *Rom.*

xiii; 8, or in loving one's neighbor as one's self, *verse* 9; not thinking it necessary to add, the duty of loving God; because, no one can love God and hate his neighbor, or love his neighbor without loving God, which is illustrated in *Matt. xxv: 31-46*: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

But, to love one's neighbor, that is, to love our brethren, and to "do unto others as we would that others should do unto us," is the natural dictate of an unbiassed conscience; and this is what is enforced, or sought to be enforced, by the general conscience of man, acting through municipal and criminal laws, as against an individual in whom it has been turned aside from its office by the temporary predominance of other principles.

That this principle was the SPIRIT dominant in St. Paul, and that which he called CHRIST in his interpretation of *Deut. xxx: 11-14*, *Rom. x: 4-8*, we might be satisfied by the single verse, *2 Cor. i: 12*:—For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience [N. B.], that in simplicity and godly [that is, perfect] sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but with the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. That which is here called the grace of God is no other than the conscience

piously referred to its true source. St. Paul's "joy" was in the testimony of a good conscience; the possession of which he acknowledged as a grace from God. This had governed him in his conversation, that is, in his intercourse with the world, and towards the Corinthians to whom his Epistle was directed. His guiding principle of life was the conscience, and not the dictates of what he calls fleshly wisdom; which means the wisdom of the *Letter*, the traditions of men, to which St. Paul was a species of infidel. He claimed to be of the true circumcision, not because he was of the stock of Abraham, but because he worshipped God in the Spirit, and rejoiced in Christ Jesus, *Phil.* iii: 3, and had no confidence in the flesh, *same verse*, where the meaning of the word flesh is clearly explained, as I have already pointed out, by the verses immediately following the use of the word. To obey the conscience, calling it a grace from God, was first in order with St. Paul; and this, too, independently of "fleshly wisdom," that is, the wisdom of Mosaic Law; which, under the name of the Letter, he says killeth. If I am particular in pointing this out, it is because I am "fully persuaded" that the point of view I am endeavoring to present is truly Pauline. St. Paul was an infidel in his day; not indeed to the Law, lawfully used, as he said, 1 *Tim.* i: 8; but to

the Letter of the Law, the Spirit of which he preached, because he recognized it in himself, calling it Christ. That Spirit was the conscience.

I must not omit to say, however, that a consistent doctrine is hardly to be found in St. Paul's discursive Epistles, taken according to the Letter.

I find Dr. Arnold quoted by Mr. Martineau in explanation of the supposed irregularities of the conscience in these words:—

“Men get embarrassed by the common cases of a misguided conscience; but a compass may be out of order as well as the conscience, and the needle may point due south if you hold a powerful magnet in that direction. Still, the compass, generally speaking, is a true and sure guide, and so is the conscience; and you can trace the deranging influence on the latter quite as surely as on the former. Again, there is confusion in some men's minds, who say that, if we so exalt the conscience, we make ourselves the paramount judges of all things, and so do not live by faith and obedience. But he who believes his conscience to be God's Law, by obeying it obeys God. It is as much obedience, as it is obedience to follow the dictates of God's Spirit; and in every case of obedience to any law or guide whatever, there must always be one inde-

pendent act of the mind pronouncing one determining proposition, 'I ought to obey;' so that in obedience, as in every moral act, we are and must be the paramount judges, because we must ourselves decide on that very principle, that we ought to obey."

It is a plain case,—the conscience must decide upon what constitutes duty. What is the final appeal of any one in deciding upon the duty, for example, of communing with any particular church? The appeal can be to no other principle than to the conscience,—as may be easily seen by considering the absurd position of one who should allege that he would feel obliged, that is, *obligated*, to do a particular act, even against his conscience; for this is a manifest contradiction.

If it is alleged that the conscience leads men into opposing pursuits, and brings about violent conflicts; then, it must be asserted that this is not a legitimate result of the operation of conscience; but it is the consequence of decisions in the name of conscience by those who have previously wandered from this principle, by which they have measurably lost the power of *rightly* deciding upon some particular instance of duty. But even where this is the case, the remedy must be found in a return to that simplicity of life which is imposed by the conscience, for this alone

offers the only hope of becoming a true follower of Christ;—as we may see by the absurdity of supposing that Christ can be pleased with a false life, on pretence of serving him.

Turn this matter as we may, as no man can hope to please God by a false life, the inference is absolutely necessary that a life of truth and rectitude can alone give any assurance whatever of acceptance with the perfect Being whom all men conceive to be God.

Besides, we see the power of this principle in supporting men under the severest trials, even when, as we suppose, they have been misguided; and it is plain that if a sense of rectitude can sustain men through the sharpest trials when misguided, as we may suppose, how can it be otherwise than that its power must be without limit when it acts in the clear light which is proper to it? The conscience, then, is the Law of God in the heart; and this is the Angel of God, under whose guidance, by obedience to his commands, God will become an enemy to our enemies, and an adversary to our adversaries, *Exodus* xxiii: 22.

I shall now proceed to show that this principle, personified, is the explanation of much of the spiritual teaching of the gospels, simply remarking that the intelligence of the age is not opposed to this portion

of the gospels, but to the presence in them of relations which, as addressed to the intellect, appear to be out of the order of providence. The moral beauty of the gospel teaching must needs be great, since this alone sustains the miracles even against the decision of the intellect, which, but for this beauty, would long since have consigned those miraculous histories to the already large class of ancient fables.

The alleged opposition of the will to the reception of the truths of the gospel, I regard as an error. The opposition is chiefly in the intellect which, under modern science, refuses to receive the miracles as literal history; their presence, therefore, in the gospels, damaging the truth really taught by them. When they were written, the spirit of science had not made itself felt so strongly as to instruct the writers in the danger of using them. The moral will of man, so far from being opposed to the gospel morals, has, on the contrary, sustained the system against the decision of the intellect on the question of miracles, putting these aside as unessential. In one point of view, the moral will has, in some cases, rebelled; yet not against the moral teaching of the gospel, but against the claim to a supernatural origin for it. But this is so far from indicating a moral perverseness, or obliquity in man, that it demonstrates the contrary. The moral decisions of the

soul are apodictic, as they say : they are positive, absolute, and admit of no appeal, when truly realized ; and this is the reason why those in whom the Spirit of Truth has made itself felt as a Law, refuse to acknowledge the authority of an external law claiming a supernatural origin. This does not indicate a perverse will, but may serve to demonstrate the supremacy, and the indestructible nature, of God's unwritten law on the heart of man ; and provides the clearest possible assurance that no perverseness of written records can ever destroy this principle, this corner-stone in Zion, which, in the language of Isaiah, shall continue from generation to generation, *Is.* li: 8. Do what we may, this Spirit makes itself felt as a sweetly constraining inward law to the obedient, or as a bondage, in the form of an external law, to the disobedient, 1 *Tim.* 1 : 9.

SECTION X.

Having thus set forward the very common-place opinion that the CONSCIENCE is an all-important principle in the spiritual organism of man, I will show, by examples, how readily this principle interprets many very striking passages of the gospels, making it more than probable that such passages originated in the action of this same principle, in those who wrote the gospels. The approval of such passages as I shall adduce, through the innate action of the Conscience, is the true ground of the assent which many give to the assumption of a supernatural authority for them. To act in obedience to the verbal, or written requirements of the gospel, upon this supposed authority, and to look for an external reward beyond the act, is to eat of the *flesh* — of the *bread* — and it is to drink of the water of *Jacob's well*; and, Whosoever drinketh of this water, as we read, shall thirst again: but to act

from the principle of rectitude, upon which the written requirement is based, is to drink of the *wine*, of the *blood*, and of the *living water*—which shall prove a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

In order to illustrate, I say, what is here intended, I will repeat a few passages, principally from the gospels, with some additions, made use of for a similar purpose in a volume I caused to be published in 1858, the design of which was to show that *Swedenborg* was a Hermetic Philosopher; remarking, simply, that Hermetic philosophers, in past ages, have been men who have recognized and bowed to the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, as seen in and through the forms, and ceremonies, and usages, which have generally been regarded as the substance of religion, in popular theologies, all over the world. This *Spirit* is more or less clearly seen in the Sacred fables, and religious allegories, and in many mythical histories and divine poems, which have, in various ages and portions of the world, held mankind spell-bound, because they were something more than literal histories and representations—referring, as they did, to an invisible spiritual geography and history, full of wonder and marvellous beauty, infinitely transcending that of the visible world; for the external world, beautiful as it is, is but a shadow of the unseen.

A Catholic before an image, expressing his idea of

the BEST, is before and in the presence of his God:— a Mohammedan absorbed in prayer, with his face towards Mecca, or the Holy City, where the remains of his idea of the BEST repose, is no less before and in the presence of his God. In these, and in all similar cases, if the worshippers could but enter into each others' minds, they might shake hands as brethren. Hence, the beautiful, I might say wonderful, passage in the Sacred Episode, the Bhagvat Geeta, in the Hindoo poem the Maharabat, where the personified God instructs his pupil: "I bear the burthen of those who are constantly engaged in my service: They also who serve other Gods with a firm belief, in doing so, involuntarily worship even me."

It is admitted freely, that the following interpretations will not appear to be decisive to those who have not attentively watched the power of the Conscience, and its laws of action in the soul; for it has its laws, like everything else. This class of students may readily imagine that the Conscience cannot do any mighty thing, such as removing "mountains" of sin— because they have no "belief" in it, *Matt.* xiii: 58. Not to think exaltedly of the Conscience—to have little or no faith in its efficacy—is to clip its wings and render it powerless. To be in this state, is to be

dead, in the sense in which this word is used in the gospel. But let the *Conscience* be "exalted," let it be "raised up from the earth," and it will draw the whole man after it, *John* xii: 32: let faith arise in it, and, though compared to a mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, it may grow to become the largest of trees, regulating, and taming, and giving shelter to all the *thoughts* and *passions* of man, themselves compared to *birds* and *beasts*.

Let it be supposed, as I have said, that the CONSCIENCE (acting, I will add, in harmony with reason), is the HOLY SPIRIT, and let us observe how aptly it may explain many things in the sacred writings.

This, then, is the *Spirit* which, in reference to the immature or imperfect man—St. Paul's natural man, (the true chaos of Genesis, according to some),—is said to have been in the world, and yet the world, (the natural man), knew it not, *John* i: 10.

This is the *Light* that shineth in darkness, and the darkness, that is, the natural man again, comprehendeth it not, *John* i: 5.

This is the *Spirit* that knocketh at the door of every human heart, asking admission, and which we are warned not to grieve away, *Ephes.* iv: 30.

This is the *Spirit* of GOD which is in the world

(man) reconciling the world unto himself, *2 Cor.* v: 19; whose bidding we are commanded to "do," if we would "know" that it is of God, *John* vii: 17.

This is the *Spirit* which, when it comes to any man, reproves the man of sin, because he has not believed in it, *John* xvi: 9.

This is the *Spirit*, which is represented at Jacob's well, as telling the woman all things that ever she did; for no other Spirit does this, and without the chance even of a mistake, but the conscience.

This is the *Spirit* which *was* before Abraham; and whose coming has been the prediction of all time ("from generation to generation," *Is.* li: 8);—at whose coming the world, that is, the man in whom it comes, is judged. And the judgment is righteous, *Rev.* xvi: 7.

This is the ubiquitous *Spirit* which is with us in heaven and no less in hell, *Psalms* cxxxix: 8; the maker of both,—a blessing or a curse; and yet it is the same spirit.

This is the *Spirit* which, personified, says,—The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life, *John* vi: 63; for this is not true of the mere spoken words of a person, but of that internal utterance which a pious soul hears through the conscience.

This is the *Spirit* which, personified, says: I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh to the

Father but by me, *John* xiv: 6; for this also is not said of a person, but of the Spirit of Truth, with which alone man may hope to realize a sense of unity with the Spirit of Holiness.

This is the *Spirit* of which it is said—whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained, *John* xx: 23;—for, this is only saying that whomsoever the conscience excuses, he is excused; and whomsoever the conscience condemns, he is condemned.

This is the *Spirit* of which it is said,—Whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, *Heb.* xii: 6; and again,—As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, *Rev.* iii: 19; adding,—Behold I stand at the door, [of your heart], and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, [obey the voice], I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me, *Rev.* iii: 20.

And again; Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the ALMIGHTY: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole, *Job*, v: 17, 18.

It is the mystical office of the CONSCIENCE to impose the correction here spoken of, and a blessing is pro-

nounced upon those who heed it and do not despise it, *Prov.* iii: 11, 12.

This is the *Spirit* that appeals to the sinner in the affecting language,—Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, *Matt.* xi: 28: for the *rest* here spoken of is moral rest, and has no reference to rest from mere physical evils, except that moral rest is the way to a power of endurance beyond the ordinary power of man, having its root in a genuine humility; for the strength of man lies in the power of God.

This is the *Spirit* through whose instrumentality men are united to each other, and thence united to God, *John* xvii; for the conscientious easily harmonize. Those who love particular things supremely, which cannot be shared in common, are necessarily divided, without having a principle of union among them. But those who love the TRUTH supremely, or justice, which is included in it, can only be superficially divided; and the more they obtain what they love, the more they must come into harmony with each other, and finally into harmony with supreme TRUTH, that is, with GOD.

The disposition to seek for and to do that which is RIGHT, has the qualities attributed to charity:—it suffereth long, and is kind; it envieth not; it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself

unseemly, seeketh not its own [to the injury of another], is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth [good] of all things, and enduring all things, never faileth.

One, destitute of conscientious truth, though he speak with the tongue of an angel, is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

This is the *Spirit*, also, which has a pentecostal power: it speaks all languages, and every man hears it in his own language. The sun does not shine upon that people on earth, where the language of this Spirit is not heard: and blessed are they whose God is the Lord, *Ps.* xxxiii: 12. Blessed are they that trust in him, *Ps.* ii: 12. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, *Ps.* cxix: 2. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after this *Spirit*, for this is to hunger and thirst after righteousness, *Matt.* v: 6.

This is the *Spirit*, at whose name every knee shall bow; for the commands of Conscience are "apodictic:" and when all things shall be subdued unto it, then shall this *Spirit* be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

This is the *Spirit*, again, to whom, personified, we are commanded to go with a full confession of our sins, through whose vicarious suffering we are pardoned.

This point in philosophy was well understood by *Plato*, who shows that a sinner can never be reinstated without a certain punishment as a purification. The sinner, according to *Plato*, is an unhappy man, miserable in the midst of his joys, until he is *punished*; yet the punishment referred to is not external, but internal: meaning that the sinner must internally suffer the pangs of a wounded conscience, as the phrase is, before he can be recovered to a state of virtue. This is the "chastening of the Lord." Now, in such a case, the *Conscience* is said to suffer: but this is said only by way of metonymy, or the substitution of one word for another; for, it is not the Conscience that suffers, but the man; that is, the sinner. The *wicked* man suffers under the judgment of a *sinless* CONSCIENCE, which, in itself, does not and cannot suffer. The *Conscience*, I repeat, is in itself, both without sin and without suffering; and by its condemnation, or "chastening" of the sinner, the sinner is prepared for pardon, which is finally pronounced by the *Conscience* itself, when the repentant state is completed, and not before. But the *Conscience*, being substituted for man, is said to suffer, the innocent for the guilty; and this is expiatory suffering, which is not only necessary, but there is no other principle "given under heaven," whereby man can feel himself redeemed, *Acts* iv: 12.

Here, also, we may see the necessity of FAITH; faith in this *Spirit*: for without faith in the HOLY SPIRIT, the Spirit of Right, of Truth — no man will submit himself to it, and make its commands the Law of life.

It is easy to see how faith in CHRIST and faith in this SPIRIT are one and the same, when we understand that all of the moral injunctions contained in the gospel proceeded from the Spirit; and this is true, whether we suppose CHRIST a person or a personification.

This is the Spirit which says: No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God, *Luke ix: 62*; for the conscience admits of no compromises. It must be accepted without any looking back wishfully towards Sodom.

This is the Spirit which says: He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me, *Matt. x: 37*. This is expressed still more strongly in *Luke xiv: 26*: If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. This only means, that no man can be a disciple of Truth who is not ready, when obliged to choose between the principle of rectitude and anything else in the world, to yield all things, rather than crucify the Spirit of Truth within himself.

There is an entire class of passages, which might be illustrated after the above manner — passages in which CHRIST speaks of himself as unable to do anything but what he seeth the Father do: the Son can do nothing of himself, *John* v: 19. He does not speak, as of himself, *xii*: 49, &c. In these passages we may see that a personified Conscience is speaking. This principle does not speak as of itself, with an independent power of its own, by which it may approve the bad and condemn the good. Its decrees are irreversible, and its commands became, in the eyes of Kant, the ground for an entire system, which he called the *Metaphysics of Ethics*, where the Conscience figures as “the Categorical Imperative,” in despite of the results of his *Critique of the Pure Reason*. In the last analysis, however, the Reason and the Conscience must unite: they must kiss each other, as Moses and Aaron kissed each other in the *Mount of God*, *Ex.* iv: 27.

I have no wish to speak of the Conscience as the only principle illustrated in the life of Jesus. Very far from it; but I regard this spiritual principle as an all-important element in comprehending the teaching of the gospels. I am by no means disposed to deny a higher principle, but I am very sure that this higher principle can only be found in a pure heart, a “right

spirit. Religion can only co-exist with righteousness; but superstition may, it is true, reign dominant in an unpurified soul.

I look upon the gospels as symbolic teaching; and from this view many, otherwise incomprehensible relations, seem full of beauty and truth. Thus, the destruction of the "innocents" by *Herod* is not a historical fact, but a myth. It is the repetition of a much older story. Among the infinity of passions and affections and principles active in man, there is only one that is entitled to pre-eminence. This is the *Angel* sent to guide us in the right way, *Ex.* xxiii: 20, it is the *prophet* like unto *Moses*, *Deut.* xviii: 15,—*Moses* himself representing this principle in the divine allegories of the earlier Scriptures. This one principle opposes the natural man while in what *St. Paul* calls the natural state; and the natural man, the *Herod* in this case, seeks to destroy it; which, however he cannot do. In the attempt, on the contrary, good is brought out of evil, and the other "children" of man which, in respect to themselves, are innocent also, (but, as wild beasts are innocent), are cut off, and thus the divine in man is preserved. That *Herod* should be selected as the author of this imaginary crime, is very appropriate; for history gives us a long list of

his offences against humanity, though among them this particular enormity is not named; and why, but because he was not guilty of it? This explanation not only accounts for the silence of history, but it relieves us also from the difficulty of understanding how so enormous a crime could have taken place under the direction of a Roman governor, and yet he not be called to an account for it.

If we call the *Spirit*, of which I am speaking, the Son, as Hermas does, we may easily conceive what is meant by his eternal generation; what is meant also by his being One with the Father, of his very substance; and in what sense he is said to be born of the eternal virgin mother of all things, as I have already intimated; and yet he is but one only son, as the son of the Widow of Nain is said to have been an "only son." This *Spirit* becoming flesh in the "man Christ Jesus," spake forth the commands of the Father—as *Moses* did before him—"our conscience bearing witness," that he spake the very truth. Hence *St. Paul* also commends what he says of his doctrine, 2 *Cor.* iv: 2, to every man's conscience in the sight of God:—and why?—because he spake from the *Conscience*.

In this direction we may understand what the Hermetic writers mean by their simile of water mingling

with water, (spirit with spirit); for, as CHRIST is One with God, so he is one with man; and to as many as receive this doctrine in spirit and in truth God gives "the power of becoming SONS of God," *John* i: 12; or, as *St. Paul* expresses it,—“As many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are to be SONS of GOD.” So, then, the “only Son,” may nevertheless be many, by the many simply being one in *Spirit*.

The supreme beauty of this principle over all others in man,—its sweetness and gentleness, “when not too much stirred up,” as the Hermetic writers say, (for when angry, it is a fiery dragon)—its combining the innocence of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent, makes it easily find its place in Eastern metaphorical representations, where the eternal, the invisible, the unspeakable, is figuratively introduced as declaring of it from heaven;—This is my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye Him*. This is the *Angel*, I repeat, and the *prophet*, and the *Law* in the heart, spoken of by *Moses*; and it is no less the SPIRIT of TRUTH and the COMFORTER, as declared in the New Testament;—not anything foreign to man, but something most intimately in him, by which he may be saved.

It may be easy to make objections to much of this

interpretation; but, as I suppose, the objections will arise chiefly with those who find it difficult to distinguish the true principle commonly called the CONSCIENCE, and this difficulty proceeds from the fact that it is generally buried in forms and crucified by ceremonies all over the world. The *Conscience* is truly a unique principle, and cannot be made use of to any end beyond itself. Hence, to be conscientious, with a view to reward, is to misuse and pervert this principle. It is a "jealous" principle, and will be served for itself alone. Not that it has not its appropriate reward; but this is what eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to *imagine*. The rewards of piety are realized somewhat like those of friendship. It gives me pleasure, says one, to serve my friend; but I do not serve him for that pleasure. So, in regard to the *Conscience*,—the *intention* must not look beyond the *duty* which the *Conscience* dictates; and it never does so, when the *Conscience* speaks audibly. This is the *Voice* of which much is said in the Scriptures, and which is not usually heard in 'the streets,' because it is best heard in the heart. To hear this voice is to hear the voice of CHRIST; and to follow it, is to "follow" CHRIST: but this is only one voice in the midst of many others "in the world." In the midst of these *other* voices,

passions of all sorts, this one voice may nevertheless be heard as one crying in the wilderness—Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths STRAIGHT. When this voice is listened to, the wolves are changed into lambs, and they then lead no more but “follow.”

If it be said that there is a want of power in the *Conscience* to *save*, and that, therefore, men must obey a written or verbal law, expressed through another, and that, if men *only would* obey the *written* law, all would be safe; then, let us observe the condition here expressed: if men *would only* obey the written, &c.; as if this might not, with more truth, be urged in favor of the *Conscience*—that, if men *would only* hear and obey its voice, all would be safe indeed. But now, as it is, men do not heed the inner law; and therefore, for this is the consequence, a written Law has grown into authority for no other reason in the world than to supply its place; and yet, the real authority for this written Law is not in the claim to a supernatural origin, but in its reasonableness, and adaptation to the wants of man. Besides, without refining very closely, we may see how the Law of *Conscience* authoritates itself by its own operation; for, we may observe how nature acts to enforce it, by the evils that follow in the train of those who depart from it—the design of which we must suppose is expressed in their effect, which is

to bring men to a sense of the value and importance of the **RIGHT** and the **TRUE**. Also, we may observe the tendency of those who lose sight of rectitude, to fear imaginary evils, with dreadful names; the invention of an *extra*, or outward Hell, having no other origin than this. Nature works by *means* no less in the moral than in the physical world, and her object ever is to preserve and protect herself; for Nature is an eternal virgin, the true **ISIS**, embracing all that is, has been, or shall be.

Why can we not perceive the truth of this as certainly, when we read it in the inscription on the Temple of Sais, as when we read it in the Revelation, i: 8: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty? We need not be puzzled because, in the one case, the words are inscribed upon a temple dedicated to the Eternal virgin; and, in the other, they are uttered in the character of her Lord: for, in this region, the **LORD** and the **LADY** are one and the same, and their mystical **SON** is no less the same. The unity of the two was anciently expressed by an anomalous figure, statues of which may still be seen in many European collections, the meaning of which is known to but few of the travelers, who gaze upon them with curious eyes. We may wonder why the eternal

Spirit appeared only in the masculine character; but must answer, that this was at the disposal of those who wrote the gospels, and they were not women. The Catholics have, in some degree, beautifully repaid this one-sidedness, by addressing their devotions to the MOTHER OF GOD; and, whatever others may think of this, in my opinion, it expresses a beautiful truth; only, indeed, it is a mutual mistake to suppose a historical person, in either case: and here, perhaps, is to be found the interpretation of the mysterious allusions to marriage in *Matt.* xix—a marriage of principles, and not of persons. But to return.

SECTION XI.

With respect to the teachings of CHRIST in general, it is evident that some practical test is always applied to them in Christendom, even by those who are most resolved to obey them—not always a wise test, we are very sure; but still, a practical test of some kind always determines the sense of so called spiritual teachings, come from what quarter they may; and those which cannot be practically carried into life are universally neglected, even by those most determined in their obedience. Rules which do not appeal to “sense and reason”—the test which St. Hilary applied to miracles—can never be received permanently in the world; and yet, this is not because of the “wicked heart of man,” but simply because, whatever is against sense and reason, is against the *nature* which God has given us, and is therefore readily decided,

with men of sense and reason, not to have come from God.

It may be said, that there are no such injunctions in the gospels: that there we may meet, indeed, with what is above reason and sense, but with nothing which cannot be accepted by sense and reason; and that there is no injunction in the gospel which all men *ought* not to obey. But, we may see that the doctrine of marriage, set forth by CHRIST in *Matt.* xix: 12, if understood literally, would depopulate the world. The doctrine, however, is not commanded: it is only recommended to those "who can receive it;" and those only can receive it [understand it?] "to whom it is given."

In the teaching which follows, however, in the same chapter, the doctrine is absolute: If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

Where do we find this doctrine practiced in Christendom? If any individual could be found who should obey it literally, he would be called a fanatic; hence, a compromise is made, and many give liberally to the poor, and are the more able to do so wisely, by not selling all they have. Besides, if the possession of property is an obstacle to perfection—a word evidently used as a synonym for the kingdom of heaven—

it should not be sold to another, to be a stumbling block in his way, but should be destroyed.

But this injunction, *Matt.* xix: 21, is another proof that the gospels were written by Essenes; for, according to *Philo* and *Josephus*, they had all things in common. Whoever entered their society, held no property as an individual, and whatever wealth he carried with him into the society, was placed in the hands of appointed Curators, for the common use of the society.

The comment which follows, *verse* 24, upon the young man's unwillingness to join the Essenes in "following" the *Spirit of Truth*, is a beautiful metaphorical allusion to the danger of riches to those who are not educated to their right use. A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle: meaning, simply, that the rich are too abundantly supplied with the means of worldly gratification, to be disposed to seek the less costly joys of what is called a spiritual life, requiring self-denial. To be born to riches, and yet not be prepared by nature, or education, for their wise use, is a misfortune—which is so open and visible a fact, that he who runs may read.

There are, no doubt, many passages in the gospels, as St. Peter tells us there are in St. Paul's Epistles,

hard to be understood, 2 *Pet.* iii: 16. If this was so in the very days of the Apostles, it would be unreasonable to suppose it can be otherwise now. But this is no reason for accepting a proffered meaning, if it be unintelligible. If we cannot "understand" a passage, or a portion of Scripture, without "wresting" it, in violation of reason and sense, we had better "wait upon it,"—as Lord Bacon said of certain other relations from the past. We ought to be fully persuaded in our own minds, *Rom.* xiv: 5; and be able to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear, 1 *Pet.* iii: 15; being careful to have a good conscience, *verse* 16. Now, these conditions cannot be complied with, unless we use our faculties to "understand" the Scriptures rationally; for, to give an irrational, or unreasonable "answer," to an inquiry in regard to our faith, is to give no answer at all.

It may be hard to understand, for example, why it was that CHRIST is represented as speaking so emphatically of giving his "flesh" to eat, as the *bread* which came down from heaven; with the promise that, if any man eat of this *bread*, he shall live for ever, *John* vi: 51; and yet, in the very same chapter, *verse* 63, declaring to his followers, that the *flesh* profiteth nothing.

I see no reason why much of this language should not be considered as having been used with some discursive latitude; as language is, evidently, in *Matt.* xix: 29,—where we read, that every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold; and shall inherit everlasting life. Here is a distinct promise of everlasting life to those who may forsake any one of several things, if done in the name of *Christ*, or for his name's sake; and if taken literally, a faithful follower might find himself, possibly, a little encumbered with relatives,—a 'hundred fathers and as many mothers, &c. It is perfectly plain, that by mere literal readings, difficulties may be multiplied, not only by hundreds, but by many thousands;—and this should admonish us to use whatever reason and sense God has given us, to guard against such interpretations as make the Scriptures meaningless or absurd. We do no real honor to the Scriptures, much less to God, by pertinaciously adhering to a preposterous literal sense, especially when a figurative or metaphorical sense may disclose a beauty. It is the literal sense undoubtedly that "profiteth nothing,"—at all events in many cases.

More than one difficulty may be made out of the sixth chapter of John. In *verse* 32 CHRIST tells his

hearers that the bread that Moses gave was not from heaven; and then in *verse 49*, he seems to give, as the evidence of it, the simple fact, that those who 'did eat manna in the wilderders' were dead. He then says that—if any man eat of *his* bread, he shall live for ever, *verse 51*. This bread is then called his flesh, *same verse*; and then again he calls it bread, *verse 58*; and, to eat of that, his hearers were not to suffer the fate of their fathers, that 'did eat manna and are dead;' but, the promise is,—He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. May we not ask, in view of these passages; what is the apparent difference between the followers of Moses and those of Christ, when, to us, they have all equally passed away? If the death of the followers of Moses was proof that his manna was not bread from heaven, why is not the death of the followers of Christ, a similar proof that his bread, also, was not from heaven?

It is evident that all of this talk about *Moses* and his *manna*, and *CHRIST* with his *bread*, is metaphorical language, teaching those who could *hear* (*verse 60*) that is, *understand* it, that by *Moses* and his *manna*, is meant the written Law; whereas *CHRIST* and his *bread* is the Spirit of the Law, and this is that which quickeneth, *verse 63*.

Some degree of latitude is absolutely necessary in

the interpretation of the metaphorical language of this sixth chapter of John, or it is perfectly certain that no available sense can be gleaned from it. We honor the Scriptures most, and God their author, when we consider them as addressed to our reason and conscience, or to the SPIRIT of TRUTH in us. They originated in this *Spirit*; and they are addressed to it; and they must be understood by it: and this is truly the appointed channel through which the soul may appreciate, and in some degree may hope to share in the illumination of godly men in former ages, *John* xvi: 13.

There are some passages in Scripture which appear to express pure paradoxes, or mere impossibilities. One occurs in *Matt.* xxi: 22: And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Here are two words used, prayer and believing, of the greatest importance in determining the sense of this passage. We have but a very superficial idea of the nature of prayer, when we see it merely in a form of words, petitioning God for something. All effort is prayer. Every desire is a species of prayer. Every pursuit is a prayer, and every earnest pursuit is an earnest prayer. But in all cases the character of the prayer takes its complexion from the object of prayer. A prayer becomes divine when God is the object; or when the particular pursuit is followed with the idea of

God as the law, within which the prayerful soul seeks what it seeks. If this idea be not present, every pursuit is an unholy prayer—as if it were addressed to a false God. We may easily see that the Scripture, in the passage under consideration, refers only to divine prayer, and then we may readily understand that no soul, acknowledging its right relations to God, can pray but in subordination to God's will, expressed in the course of nature, which is the order of providence. A soul in this state, really never prays for anything but for God's will to be perfected in himself; and this is a work which is ever fulfilling itself, and the prayer of such a soul is always answered. The word, believing, as a condition of prosperous prayer, will show us the same thing. Men do not really believe, in their hearts, that anything can prosper in the world except in subordination to God—by which I mean the orderly course of nature. So far as this is known, man never believes anything contrary to it, and cannot pray, believingly, for any such thing. No man ever prays that fire may not burn; that he might live under water; that the sun may not rise in the morning, &c. But, at the point where his knowledge ceases, and he is uncertain as to the order of things in nature, he prays, that is, he seeks what he desires in a vague state of belief, which is better expressed by the word uncertainty.

But this uncertainty is converted into belief, when the prayerful soul refers its object to God; for in that direction such a soul sees its wishes already fulfilled; and not the less fulfilled when the special object is lost. For, in the truly prayerful soul, God is the real object, and such a soul is a believing soul. Now, the admonition of CHRIST, in *Matt. xxi: 22*, was addressed to disciples; that is, to the disciples of Truth, for CHRIST is TRUTH; and his saying is not applicable to others, because they do not come within the conditions under which the admonition was used.

This may seem to be an over-refined exposition, but it will prove to be the true one.

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SECTION XII.

I have already intimated one of the objects which, as I suppose, the writers of the gospels had in the scene they have exhibited on Mount Calvary. I am very well aware of the astonishment with which any other than a literal interpretation of this scene is likely to be received; but as the fiction of a supernatural birth expresses the clear purpose of the writers to have been merely an artificial or artistic mode of bringing upon the stage of life a Spirit essentially invisible, through which to give a written body to their teachings as proceeding from that Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, whether conceived as the Spirit of the Hebrew sacred books, or as the Spirit of the Church under the symbol of a woman, there must have been some special object in the scene by which the personification of the Spirit of Truth was removed from this lower world. It is not however denied, but

that a real person might have suffered on Mount Calvary,—and that, too, for the sake of the Truth. The world has seen too many examples of this species of suffering to make it improbable in the case of Jesus, as a man. But as the representation of the supernatural birth lies altogether out of the order of nature, so do most of the attendant circumstances of the death of Jesus, as reported in the gospels; and the question naturally arises, as to what the writers designed to teach or to signify by that event. The question lies, with very many in this age, between a total denial of the story, and some interpretation of it, which may be acceptable to ‘sense and reason.’

Most certainly I look upon this scene, or most of its accompaniments, as not historically true. As the eternal God has never been born of a mere carnal woman, so has he never suffered death by crucifixion at the hands of man. Yet, at the same time, the scene in Mount Calvary figures to us a most important truth.

The priesthood of the Jews was at *Jerusalem*, but the Jews themselves extended over *Palestine* and to *Alexandria*. Now, there was no learning of any importance at *Jerusalem*,—no science, no philosophy;—and the whole Jewish system of religion had degen-

erated into formalism, by which its *Spirit* was smothered. But *Alexandria* had succeeded to the philosophy of Greece. This philosophy was at its height in Greece some three or four hundred years before the new era; and, passing to Alexandria, its light extended about the same period after the new era. Of the Greek philosophers *Plato*, a mystic writer, is known to have been in the highest repute in Alexandria. From this school came many distinguished philosophers, both enemies and friends of Christianity; among the latter, *Origen* himself: and coincident with the date of the new era we find *Philo*, a Jew, in the spirit of this school, giving interpretations of the Hebrew sacred books in extenso, calling the Hebrew religion a divine philosophy. He gives us the remarkable account of the Essenes, with whom he undoubtedly held very close relations, and discloses their principle of regarding their sacred writings as a living animal (of course a rational person), its letter representing the Body, and its soul representing the Spirit. This *Spirit* they saw had been crushed by the formalism of the Jewish priesthood.

Casting their eyes upon the state of religion in Jerusalem, the Essenes conceived the idea of giving a dramatic life and death to what they regarded, nevertheless, as an invisible ever-living Spirit. One example

was sufficient to be followed by many; and so we have several gospels where we read of a miraculously born person, no mere man sufficing for their purpose; and he was tragically removed from the scene through the instrumentality of the priesthood, whom the Essenes regarded as the murderers of the Spirit indeed.

The gospel writers, in order to carry out their purpose, and exhibit the Jewish priesthood, Elders, Scribes, Pharisees and people, as the instruments of the death of Jesus, are very minute in referring to them.

Thus:—It was the chief priests, Elders and Pharisees, who took council how they might put Jesus to death. *Matt.* xxvi: 3–4. *Mark* xiv: 1. *Luke* xxii: 2. *John* xi: 47 and 53.

It was the chief priests and Elders that bribed Judas to betray Jesus, *Matt.* xxvi: 15.

It was the chief priests and all the Council who sought for witnesses against Jesus, to put him to death, *Mark* xiv: 55: they sought for false witnesses, *Matt.* xxvi: 59.

It was the chief priests and Pharisees that sent officers to take Jesus, *John* vii: 32: with lanterns, torches and weapons, *John* xviii: 3.

It was the High priest, the chief priests and Elders,

that accused him, *Matt.* xxvi: 65, and xxvii: 12. *Luke* xxiii: 10.

It was the "voices" of the chief priests and Elders that "prevailed" in procuring the sentence of death, *Luke* xxiii: 23.

It was the chief priests that "moved the people" to call for the release of Barabbas, instead of Jesus, *Mark* xv: 11; and they cried out crucify him, *verse* 13; and they cried out the more exceedingly, crucify him, *verse* 14; and they cried out the more fiercely, *Luke* xxiii: 5.

It was the chief priests that led Jesus away and crucified him, *John* xix: 15-18.

The chief priests, Scribes and Elders, mocked him on the cross, &c., &c., *Matt.* xxvii: 41.

In all this, we see that the immediate authors of the death of Jesus, were those in Jerusalem who had killed the *Spirit* of the Jewish religion by their formalism, ceremonies, and superstitions; by which they had converted the house of prayer into a den of thieves, *Matt.* xxi: 13, *Mark* xi: 17. It was they who had made the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions.

Of the three sects among the Jews, the Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes, the two first named, with the

priesthood at Jerusalem, as I have said, were observers of the forms and ceremonies of the Jewish religion; and they had put "a yoke upon the necks of the disciples" (of Truth), which, as St. Peter said, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." These were the generation of vipers, of the 3d chapter of *Matthew*: But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? *verse* 7. These were the "hypocrites" of the 23d chapter of the same gospel, who had shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither going in themselves, nor suffering others to enter therein, *v.* 13. These were the hypocrites who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretense made long prayers. They paid tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these they ought to have done, and not left the other undone. These were the fools, and blind guides, who could strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. They made clean the outside of the platter, but within were full of extortion and excess, &c., &c., through the whole chapter.

But where were the *ESSENES* throughout this tremendous anathema? Not a syllable about them; and why? but because this anathema came from the bosom of

their society. The Jewish priesthood had buried the SPIRIT OF TRUTH in their forms, ceremonies and traditions. But the Essenes saw the TRUTH under the letter, and through the dead ceremonies of the church. This was their secret, the attainment of which was regarded as a great mystery, because it is said to be of a nature not to be communicated by an external process to man; for it must be felt and lived. Those who would "know" it, must "do" it. The members of this society only spoke of their secret among each other, as the Masonic brethren speak of their secret at the present day; and they only wrote of it in allegory and symbolism, in obedience to a solemn oath—as any one may see by reading Philo's account of the Therapeutæ, who were a portion of the Essenes. Whether the Masons of the present day understand this secret or not, is not now the question.

It is true, that the writers of the gospels seem to offer an occasion for the hate of the chief priests against Jesus, in his terrible denunciation of them. But this is, as I see it, only a necessary part of the drama. The Spirit of Truth must be supposed to condemn the corruptions of a degraded church.

In order, now, to see the artificially dramatic character of this scene, we must look closely at another,

and a very important point, to wit: that the gospel writers, in order to carry out their main purpose, and show the priesthood as the principal authors of the murder of the Spirit of Truth, were obliged to violate all of the probabilities of history, in the character they were compelled to give to a Roman governor. We must know very little of the character and the policy of the Roman government, before we can believe, for a moment, that there is a particle of truth in the story, so far as Pilate is made to act a part in the tragedy. His public character is sacrificed against all probability; and he is compelled to exhibit the most incredible weakness as a private individual. With the whole power of the Roman government to support him in the protection he was bound to give to the innocent, he allows the priests of a religion, which, as a Roman, he could not have been concerned to maintain, to carry to execution one in whom, after the fullest examination, he had found no fault, *Luke xxiii: 14*; and though "wishing" to preserve Jesus, with the Roman army to enforce his wishes, he permits the mob of a conquered country to perpetrate the stupendous crime recorded in the gospels, *John xix: 12*.

I repeat, now, that there is no probability in this part of the story. The Roman governor was bound by his place, his power, his reputation, and his sense of

justice, to have protected Jesus; and we have no reason for supposing him wanting in a due sense of these claims upon him.

The true operation of the Roman government is clearly set forth in the account of its treatment of St. Paul, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, in the course of which *Festus* declares, in the presence of *Agrippa*, that,—It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid to his charge, *Acts* xxv: 16. In the case of JESUS, the Roman governor inquires into the accusations himself; examines JESUS personally; and not only finds “no fault” in him, but “wishes” to save him, and yet allows him to be sacrificed! This cannot be a genuine history, and all that can be seen in it is the design of the writers to exhibit the opinion of Pilate as so much testimony in favor of the innocence of JESUS, and it was thus introduced in order to set off the actual crime of the priesthood in its greatest enormity.

The only explanation that can be given of this, must be found in the purpose of the writers of the drama. They were of the Essene sect of the Jews, and had a doctrine, held as a secret among themselves, by which they saw the spirit of the Jewish

religion murdered under the law and the ceremonies. For their own edification they devised a dramatic representation of this murder of the Spirit; and they were compelled, in the execution of their design, to outrage all the probabilities of history. The august authority of a Roman governor they trampled under foot; and made a priesthood, without civil power, take an innocent life against the express wishes of the governor in whom the civil power resided, and who represented at that time the greatest power known in the world. There cannot be a particle of truth in this part of the story.

But the authors of the story were compelled to make a history suitable to their purpose; and they obliged the priesthood to crucify the Spirit of Truth.

This being accomplished, the gospel writers exhibit a beautiful Truth in what followed. The Spirit of Truth cannot die;—and as often as it is buried under the forms and superstitions of an outward church, it rises again, and becomes visible to those who love it, though not to others. Christ, in the resurrection, was seen only by his friends, and followers, the followers of Truth, who alone are privileged to see this Spirit.

I repeat again, that the whole of this part of the story is mythical, and without a historical basis; and I find no difficulty in attributing it to the Essenes;

and I do this the more easily as I advance in a comprehension of the wonderful spiritual sense contained in the gospel relations.

St. John has given us one intimation not communicated by either of the other gospel writers, and one of the most significant and beautiful that can be imagined. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all refer to the parting of the garments of Jesus; but John alone gives us the peculiar fact, that "the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout." The garments were parted and divided among the multitude; but there was one thing which was whole and entire, without break or seam from the top throughout. This was not divided, but lots were cast for it. As a mere historical fact, this would not seem to be of much importance, but as a symbolism it is exquisitely beautiful, and may serve to teach us the double nature of Truth; its unity and its multiplicity: and that while the "garments" of Truth may be divided and dispersed, there is yet, inherent in Truth, an essential unity, without seam or break of any kind, which the multitude is not allowed to destroy. This unity is the 'living water,' the "wine," the "Spirit that quickeneth." This is the true gospel, of which the written gospels themselves are but the garments: and do we

not see how these are divided in the christian world, every sect claiming its shred, and holding it forth as the seamless coat?

Before leaving the topic of the crucifixion, I will barely say, that the writers of the gospels might have had more than one object in presenting the world with that scene. They might have had the opinion that the death of the Body is necessary to the liberation of the Spirit. Those who have made themselves acquainted with ancient opinions, especially those entertained at Alexandria, know very well that much was said of what was called "the descent of the soul" from supernal regions; and that the Body was regarded as its prison, if not its punishment, for some crimes committed in a pre-existent state. Those who are curious to look into these opinions may consult Glanville's *Lux Orientalis*.

Another object might have been, that of signifying the triple nature of man, in the dramatic arrangement of the *three* upon the cross; the Spirit of Life being placed between, as it were, the soul and the body, represented as thieves:—because, while in the body they exercise an unlawful control over the Spirit; while yet, one of the two, by uniting with the Spirit, may be ("to-day") in paradise. The soul by uniting

itself with, or reverencing the Spirit of Truth, shares in its life; but by yielding to the body it perishes with the body.

In the consideration of the meaning of a symbol or type, we are by no means limited to one or even two or three senses, for it may have many senses. The main point is, to assign no meaning to it which is not true to nature. A type which signifies nothing in nature, signifies nothing at all. We are at liberty also to assign probable meanings, provided only that it be done problematically and not dogmatically. Thus, some of the incidents recorded as having transpired on Mount Calvary, may have been intended expressly to signify what was supposed to take place in an actual death: the rending of the vail of the temple means, for example, the dissolution of the the natural body in death; this being the vail of the Temple of the Holy Ghost; the "flesh" being called a vail in *Heb. x: 20*. The quaking of the earth and the rending of the rocks, may be similarly understood; and even the appearance in the "holy city," of the bodies of "Saints which slept," may signify that preternatural memory, which has been often said to mark the experiences of the dying.

Another object, still, may have been to signalize

what has been so often exhibited in the history of the world, and most frequently in the very name of Christ; that, "everywhere that a great soul speaks forth its thought is Golgotha." To speak into popular opinions, no matter what they are, is generally to gain immediate eclat; but a prophet has no honor in his own country. He is crucified. Even in cases of dissent on minor points, and which would seem to be of no great importance, we see how the dissenter is pursued with satanic malignity. A fair reputation is no protection against the most malicious insinuations, if not downright slanders. To guard against this, very many smother their thoughts, and live a lie indeed — by an external conformity with some system in which, in their hearts, they have no real sympathy. Some men are ready to die for opinions, while others seem to prefer maintaining them by the murder of their brethren.

Meantime, it must be admitted that, as conformity to generally received opinions is no sign of the truth, so neither is an opposition to such opinions any sign of it. When the gospel appeared, it had the whole Jewish world against it; and when Luther appeared, he had nearly the whole Christian world against him. All the world believed, once, that the Earth was the center of the universe, &c. We should see that questions of

Truth cannot be determined by vote ; which may show us the folly of attempting to fix a Christian creed by the vote of councils, so often resorted to in vain in former ages. Such determinations necessarily fall into their places as mere historical facts, upon which the philosophical historian makes his own inferences. A truth, really seen to be such, may perhaps always be seen in a double character, as it is in time and in space—as it extends from generation to generation, and as it extends over geographical spaces. Some speculative writers have indicated something of this by giving what they call both an altitude and a latitude to truth ; or, like the Swede, by talking of discrete and continuous degrees, the unity of which has a name that may mean something or nothing, according as it is understood. But, in such speculations, the student attains a position which, however seemingly true for himself, is no law for others—a conclusion which ought, at all events, to enforce the doctrine of charity.

Be all this as it may, the scene on Mount Calvary, whatever else it may represent, most clearly and decidedly indicates the opinion of the writers, that the Spirit of the Hebrew religion had been murdered by the Jewish priesthood ; while yet the spirit cannot die. The Spirit is the mystical Father of the Church ; and

the Church is, at the same time, the Bride of the Lord, and the Mother of the Son of God, -- as regarded by the gospel writers: and yet this is seen only in the Spirit. He that hath an ear, let him hear.

SECTION XIII.

The Essenes, as I have repeatedly said, were the spiritual sect among the Jews. They formed a society having a peculiar doctrine, which the members were solemnly sworn to hold as a secret. They were not to speak of their doctrine except among each other, and they were under oath not to write of it except in allegory and symbolism, "as they received it." The members were not initiated, or received into the society, until a trial of three years had proved their fitness for a participation in the sacred knowledge claimed as peculiar to the society. We are fully informed of the character of this society, by both Josephus and Philo; and the latter has given us a clue for discovering the nature of the secret which separated this sect from the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

That their secret had reference to the Hebrew Sacred Scriptures, there cannot be a doubt; and in the

statement of Philo, that they regarded those Scriptures, as a living animal, comparing the letter to the body, and the soul to the Spirit, we are furnished with the broadest possible hint for understanding their secret. We are blind not to see it.

It is not out of place to remark here, a fact to which I have already alluded, that the Free-masons of modern times claim a direct doctrinal descent from the Essenes; and, in asserting this claim, they affirm that the Essenes were in possession of what they call the Temple Secrets — thus, certainly carrying the Essenes back to the days of Solomon. Now, the Masons, besides being a brotherhood, have a secret which relates in part, at least, to a tradition concerning the death and resurrection of Hiram Abiff, “the Widow’s Son,” 1 *Kings* vii.

I am not a Mason myself, but I have studied very carefully the books of Dr. Oliver and Dr. Mackey, on Free-masonry, both of these writers being acknowledged lecturers on the mystic art. My object has not been to gratify an idle curiosity, but I have been willing to profit by whatever hints I might find in the books in question, and they are by no means few or unimportant.

Now, who was the Widow’s Son, in the tradition, who was murdered, and then brought to life?

The Essenes had many books of their own relating to their secrets, which they kept concealed with the greatest possible care. Eusebius has given the opinion that some of these books, "it is highly probable," are "our Gospels and Epistles;"—and do not these relate to a wonderful death and resurrection?

In the course of time, a Pharisee, St. Paul, penetrated, as I suppose, the precise secret of the Essenes: for an actual, positive truth cannot be confined within the limits of a society, by any means whatever. Conventional signs may be limited to the initiated of a society, but they are not Truth, and answer only a conventional use. *St. Paul* saw the Truth of the Scriptures under the letter, and became a preacher of it. His preaching was successful, and he gained many converts.

But now, as must have happened, many of those converts had not entered in at the "right door," and the Apostle to the Gentiles had the greatest difficulty in keeping his followers in the way of Truth, as we may see especially by his Epistle to the Galatians. They were continually sliding back to "the beggarly elements," to the great distress of *St. Paul*. I am afraid of you, says he, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain, *Gal.* iv: 11.

At this period the written gospels were not publicly

known. But, as we may readily suppose, the preaching of *St. Paul* forced them out of the hands of the Essenes, and they became public, through the unavoidable mixture of the converts of *St. Paul* with the genuine ESSENES; for they both held, in fact, the same doctrine.

The only difference that I can discover between the view of *St. Paul* and that of the Essenes, as I conceive that of the latter to have been, is, that the Essenes saw the Spirit of Truth in the Hebrew sacred books, whereas *St. Paul* saw it in the Church; though he also saw Christ in the flesh, in the law. But we must consider the Spirit of Truth but one, whether seen in the Scriptures or in the Church. In *Philippians* iii: 4-6, *St. Paul* evidently refers to the written Scriptures and Jewish ceremonies as the "flesh;" certainly meaning the *flesh of Christ*, which, in *2 Cor.* v: 16, he tells us he had left behind him; the love of the Spirit constraining him thereto. In *Colos.* i: 24, he speaks of the Church as the "body" of Christ, as he does also in *Ephes.* i: 22, 23. But he is speaking of the same Spirit, which is also the Spirit of humanity; and this was his *mystery*, which he had preached, calling it sometimes the *faith*, and sometimes the *gospel* he preached; and by his preaching, I repeat, he had

brought into the fold many who could not, as I suppose, fully understand his doctrine.

Hence, as the accessions from "without" increased, a diluting process became an inevitable result. Many of the converts from the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Gentiles, could not understand the doctrine of the SPIRIT; and as this class increased, a division grew up among the followers of the TRUTH. The real Essenes remained in the possession of their secret, while a nominal portion of them received the name of Christians, which was given to them at Antioch. And this portion, always tending to a majority,—till visited anew by the SPIRIT of TRUTH,—finally superseded numerically the original sect; and the mythical history of JESUS began to be regarded as veritable history.

Many of the so-called Fathers of the Church however, continued to be imbued with the SPIRIT of TRUTH, and saw well enough, that the gospels were symbolic books, needing interpretation. These finally fell into a decided minority, and gradually receded from the popular observation, leaving the more numerous and probably noisy new comers in possession of the public eye and ear.

But the Essene doctrine was not lost. It has come down to the present time, and it never can be lost; for as often as it is *buried* under the letter or the

mere forms of the church, it will "come forth" again. Truth cannot die: and this is, itself, the great TRUTH which is taught in the gospel representation of the death and resurrection of CHRIST,—the SPIRIT of TRUTH,—murdered by the Jewish priesthood. This same TRUTH, overlaid and buried in forms and ceremonies and traditions from age to age, is perpetually rising again and again, and teaching the doctrine of itself. Heaven and earth shall pass away but the Truth shall not pass away. Whosoever loves anything better than he loves TRUTH, does not love CHRIST; for CHRIST is the SPIRIT of TRUTH.

Many of the early Fathers, in all probability Essenes themselves, were allegorists either upon one, or more, and some of them upon all of the miracles of JESUS. *Origen* was the most thorough; but *St. Augustine*, *St. Jerome*, *St. Theophylact*, *St. John of Jerusalem*, *St. Hilary*, *St. Gregory the great*, *Eusebius Gallicanus*, *St. Theophilus of Antioch*, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, *St. Irenæus*, and others, were all of them to a greater or less extent allegorists. A few of them denied the reality of some of the miracles, as being "against sense and reason,"—a rule which must exclude all miracles or none whatever. To explain one, or two, or half a dozen of the miracles upon natural grounds, even if it could be done satisfactorily,

would, in the first place, only serve to convert the relations into a mere ordinary history of something in the past; while, in the next place, the attempt itself to make such explanations shows that the presence of miracles in the gospels is offensive to the intellect, and can only be tolerated when no explanation is possible.

The author has heard it gravely asserted, that the reason why the disciples, going to *Emmaus*, did not recognize *Jesus* was, because it was in the evening; and, probably, too dark to distinguish the person of any one! as if such a fact, for such a purpose, entered into the contemplation of the author of the gospel. This explanation only makes a ridiculous story of one of the most beautiful and instructive parabolic representations in the gospels. I have already explained the meaning of this story:* but it expresses so beautiful a truth that I must again insist upon it.

The reader must consider that the story is altogether Jewish, and has reference to a belief in the truth, the *CHRIST*, of the old or Hebrew sacred books. This *Truth* is not one of mere history which a lad of fifteen, or, it may be, of twice this age, can be supposed to apprehend fully. The sacred books of the Hebrews express the most profound sense of Truth which can enter into the soul of man; I mean, when recognized

* In Section VI.

in their full power. It is impossible that a very young man should fully appreciate these books. Some useful meaning may be gathered, no doubt, by those of any age from many parts of the Bible; something to touch the heart, in the Psalms and elsewhere, and many useful prudential maxims every where, for the conduct of life. But, valuable as this may be, there is a profounder sense in these old Hebrew books. We may be certain of this without accepting the interpretations of Philo, of Origen, of Swedenborg, or those of any other individual, some of which may be fanciful and dreamy. Now this deeper Truth I suppose to be unseen to very many full grown men, and to nearly all of the very young and inexperienced, simply because they express views of the world attained only in later stages of life, when seen realities have measurably given place to the unseen; sense to reason.

In order now to understand the teaching of this story of the disciples going to Emmaus, let us suppose that two or three full grown mature men are "gathered together," for the sole purpose of discovering the true sense of the Scriptures, after having perhaps most of their lives looked upon these records with very little else than a traditional respect. Let us suppose that these "two or three" are conscious to themselves of having no divided purpose, but that their

sole object is to examine the Scriptures in the Spirit of Truth.

I say now, first, that this fulfills the condition expressed in *Matt.* xviii: 20. They have assembled in the name of Truth; and the Spirit of Truth is in their "midst," according to the promise. They are now, by supposition, looking into the Scriptures to find the Truth of them, the *Spirit* of them, the *CHRIST* of them. This *Spirit*, in the story under consideration, is represented as drawing near and going with them, at the moment when they "communed together and reasoned" upon the sacred subject. But now, the disciples, by supposition, have the Spirit of Truth, really in themselves; and this is the Jesus, the Christ, of the sacred books; but, as yet, this Spirit is not seen in the sacred books; and this is represented in the story by the simple expression, "their eyes were holden." They proceed in their inquiry, which is dramatically represented as growing out of the oppressed state of the Church, which is of the same nature with her Son; for the Church is Mary, the Mother of Jesus in the allegory. But here the Church must be regarded as it is in the Spirit, and not as she appears under human administration. In the Spirit, the Church is immaculate; but as she appears in the world, she, at times crucifies her Son. She was re-

garded in this depressed state by the gospel writer, who represents the disciples, going to Emmaus, as talking of this depressed state of the Church; and that which they saw depressed them. But their faith prevailed over this view; and they saw, in the Scriptures themselves, that the Spirit of Truth is subject to such temporary obscurations, from which, nevertheless, it rises from time to time. By thus passing in review before their minds various portions of the Scriptures, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets," they at length recognized the Truth, the Christ of the sacred books, as a living eternal Spirit, notwithstanding the depressed state of the external Church. This perception of the Truth, which is only possible "to them that are of full age," *Heb. v: 14*, is expressed by saying that, "their eyes were opened:" and this, I say, means that their understandings were opened, by the Spirit of Truth in themselves; as expressed in the same chapter, *verse 45*, where the Spirit of Truth is represented as opening the eyes of the understandings of the "eleven,"—and why was this? The reason is given in the *same verse*: it was in order that "they might understand the Scriptures." A true faith begins within; and that beginning of faith, or perception of CHRIST in the Hebrew sacred books, is symbolized in this story of the disciples going to Emmaus.

My only reason for dwelling upon this, is the perfect assurance I feel of the correctness of this interpretation of the story, which is not a history, but a symbolic method of illustrating the process by which a perception of the Truth of the sacred books of the Hebrews passed into the minds of those who approached those records in the Spirit of Truth; and I am the more earnest in setting forward this view, because the story is as true to-day as when it was written. The Spirit of Truth alone opens the eyes of those who seek for it, either in the sacred records, or elsewhere. This Spirit, under the name of faith, which means fidelity, is as necessary now to an understanding of the Scriptures, as it was in the days of the Apostles.

That the story in Luke represents the vanishing of Christ, after the disciples had recognized him, is nothing more than a necessary part of the *formula* assumed by the writer. CHRIST, the Spirit, had been brought forward as a person, and it was necessary to dispose of him. The writer makes him vanish; but even this might be interpreted as signifying, that when the true Spirit becomes known to any one, its external representatives vanish. St. Paul himself seems to disown the *Letter*, under the name of *Christ in the flesh*, 2 *Cor.* v: 16: because, when the Spirit is known, the "schoolmaster," as he calls the same *Letter*, *Gal.* iii:

24, 25, is no longer needed. That the "schoolmaster" may be discarded too soon, is very true, as set forth in the 13th chapter of *Theologia Germanica*, where the same doctrine is very clearly intimated. But the very meaning of the expression, *Christ in the flesh*, seems to have been utterly lost out of the Church; and with it, also, the true meaning of CHRIST as the Spirit. But to return to the Fathers.

Many of them, I have said, were allegorists; but, for the most part, they appear to have received the miracles as historical, after the time of Papias, when we begin to have something like reliable dates; and yet we may believe that this was often done out of condescension to "babes" in the faith, who must have, it would seem, something for the imagination to rest upon—unable to seize the Spirit. Even *St. Paul* became all things to all men, to gain some to God; allowing those to "eat" that would, requiring only a "good conscience;" and so, likewise, with *St. Paul*, circumcision was nothing, and uncircumcision was nothing; but a new creature was everything.

If *St. Paul* could temporize in what he, of course, thought unessential, so might his successors, in accommodation to the "weak," with whom a belief in the miraculous, in that age, was almost natural, from ignorance of natural philosophy, and the demands of science

generally: for there was nothing deserving the name of science at that period, especially at Jerusalem, the very headquarters of superstition.

But the state of learning has changed, and it cannot now be denied, that a large portion of the learned modern world are at least luke-warm on the subject of religion; not because of any natural or acquired aversion to the subject itself, but because it is presented to them under conditions which violate their sense of the order of God's providence, and thus derogate from the majesty of the divine Being.

Generally, the so-called infidel is not hostile to religion; perhaps never so, but only to the forms of it, when these seem to be absurd and false. Man loves Truth instinctively, and hates falsehood; and it is a libel upon his nature to assert the contrary. Give him Truth, indeed, and if he understands it, he will drink it as the water of life. Error is only acceptable when it wears the face of truth. A reputed infidelity turns out almost always to be a protest against a real or an apparent falsehood, for Truth is an eternal virgin, and the first love of all mankind; the first born among many brethren. To wander from it is to love, that is, to worship, some mistaken image or shadow of it; and this it is, that leads man into the "wilderness;" through and out of which, however, every man carries

within him a *Moses*, a *Joshua*, a *Jesus*; an *angel*, a *prophet*, a *word in the Heart*, through whom the pure wine of Truth may be brought to the hungry and parched soul; feeding it also with quails and manna from heaven: for these are only other names for the same thing. *Joshua* is only another name for *Jesus*, (or *Jesus* for *Joshua*), and the *battles* of *Joshua* represent a symbolic history of the fight of the good and the true against the evil and the false. Except from this point of view, the *Anakims* are no more to us than the *Iroquois*.

Wonderful as these Bible teachings are, I see no reason for regarding them as of miraculous or supernatural origin, however much they may surpass the powers of ordinary men to have produced. The writers of the gospels were not ordinary men: they were very extraordinary men, as any one may know who will read Philo's account of the Therapeutæ.

In this view there is no particular wish, as I have repeatedly said, to deny the historical. I only say, that a history so overloaded with impossibilities, as seen through "sense and reason," (in the language of St. Hilary), however much historical truth it may really contain, encloses much also that is not historical; yet, so far as the seeming historical is herein denied, it is only denied in favor of the spiritual. As mere history,

the gospel would be a thing of the past; but as a divine allegory it was designed to teach an ever-living truth. To hold pertinaciously to the letter, or to the literal history, is to lose its significance to the Spirit; and this was the error of the Jewish priesthood in regard to the older Jewish Scriptures: but to yield the letter, not in a spirit of doubt or denial, but in devotion to the Truth, is to find the very spirit from which the letter proceeded; though it is true, at the same time, that to lose the letter, except in devotion to the Truth, (for "my sake," as expressed in the gospel), is to lose both the letter and the spirit; and this is to wander perpetually in the "dark wood" of Dante. To find the Spirit, and to walk in it, is to find the "Law of the Lord" and "to walk therein,"—and this is to "walk with God." When the Law of the LORD is said to be perfect, as we read in the Scripture, the unwritten Law is spoken of: for this both preceded and will survive the written Law; and this is the eternal Law, the eternal "Word," which *St. Paul* labored to make known for the purpose of showing its supremacy over the written Law, which he speaks of as a vail, figuratively placing it over the hearts of the Jews, 2 *Cor.* iii: 15; and this vail he tells us is "done away in CHRIST;" that is, in the Spirit, the unwritten Law in the heart, which neither is nor can be anything

but the law of a purified CONSCIENCE; and we abuse ourselves when we seek for it elsewhere.

Hence the language: "When a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is *lawful* and *right*, he shall save his soul alive." What is it to do that which is lawful and right? Read all the philosophy that has ever been written on the subject, and in the end the rule is found in the *conscience*, or it is not found at all;—but it must be found in the *conscience* itself, and not as it may be acted upon by any mere passion mistaken for the Spirit itself,—the passions being the "clouds" through which "the SON of MAN" is seen to descend as out of heaven. It is "the path of the just man" only that "shineth to perfect day," and we are warned to mark the perfect man and behold the *upright*; "for the end of that man is peace."

In a subordinate sense the *written* scriptures are the "clouds," through which the "Son of Man" is seen to descend, as from heaven. But this is a Truth for the Jews, or for those who receive the Hebrew sacred books as divine. It was through these Scriptures that the two disciples of the Truth, going to *Emmaus*, "communing" of the Truth in the Law and the Prophets, finally recognized that *Spirit*, because it was in themselves. That is, they recognized the unity of

the Spirit, as in themselves and in the sacred writings which had proceeded from the same Spirit. This was the true new-birth for Jews. But we should not forget that the Spirit of Truth preceded Abraham, and all of the records of it; and is able to see itself in those records, because it *was* before them, and is the true judge of them.



SECTION XIV.

A portion of the view that I have been endeavoring to present, may be seen, as in an image, in the single case of a father and son. The father, according to his wisdom and experience, stands over the son naturally as the Law. His commands are authoritative over the son, who, while "a child," *Gal. iv: 1*, is a servant and bondman to the Law expressed in the father. In process of time the child is supposed to attain maturity and to become capable of understanding the *reason* of his father's commands, which then are felt no longer as a burthen. This process is only extended in a nation. A wise ancestry provides laws and usages, designed to protect the youth of the nation, and to conduct them to the Land of Promise, which is a Holy Land; and this is only another name for Holiness. These laws are written, and stand first in order and authority over the youth, the children of the nation,

while needing an external guide. In process of time, those who are capable of it, enter into the Land of Promise, and understand the process by which they have reached their condition. The father as the authoritative Law is the Alpha; and the son, while he is a "child," is the Omega; I say, as an image: but, in time, the Omega grows into the Alpha, when the authoritative Law, which was first in the beginning, becomes the last; though these are in truth of one and the same nature essentially; just as the father and the son are of one and the same nature. This spirit of life, personified, says, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. And this is a perpetual saying, like many others we meet with in the sacred writings, especially in the prophecies: as in *Isa.* li: 7-8, Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart [?] is my Law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

By interpreting such passages as specific prophecies pointing to any merely historical time, we lose a large portion of their beauty and sublimity, and nearly all of

their value. They are of universal significance, and are applicable to all time.

The Bible, as we see, is a composite volume. To Christians it is divided into the Old and the New Testament, though the Old Testament is usually divided into the Law and the Prophets, with other portions, including histories, sacred poems, &c. This entire volume, however its several parts were composed and embodied as a whole, may be regarded as a certain unity, passing through ages and ages of humanity as one unalterable thing; not speaking, however, absolutely: for the Bible, we suppose, had an origin and has been subject to some mutations and additions. But for ages it may be considered as something fixed. Now, side by side with it in the history of humanity, there has been a Church, undergoing, it is true, various external changes: but, in general, we see an organized church running parallel with the Bible, supported by the Bible, yet bringing the Bible down the stream of time, and the two are destined to pass together to a later period of the world, to which no one can assign any limit. If I ask myself how these two, the Bible and the Church, are related to each other?—it seems to me that they express a mystical unity, of which the Bible is the Law, and the Church is the Spirit; and yet, I cannot but attribute the Bible

to the Church; for humanity preceded the volume, which has risen in its bosom. But here, the Church becomes a mystical being, older than the Scriptures, to which she now appeals: and I seem to see, also, the Church in a double character: its external form becomes the Body, and its internal life the Spirit. Its forms may change, but its spirit must remain ever one and the same. This Spirit is a perpetual priest after the order of Melchisedec: without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, &c.

Now, such matters have been written about in former ages by personifying the principles involved in them; calling the Church a mother, the mother of faith; while yet the Church, externally, is a product of faith. Faith, which in principle, means fidelity, and also righteousness, is the daughter of the Church. But the Spirit of the Church is, at the same time, the Church itself, the Father of the Church and the Son of the Church; the brother of faith, and faith itself at the same time.

I say, now, that much of the Bible is written about these *principles*, personified; but I say, also, that the true Spirit has never been imaged in writing so as to be recognized as historic, for it is not ordinary history. Hence, I say, that the real New Covenant is

not the written New Testament; but it is forever new; and every preacher of the gospel is a representative of it, and he represents it according to the measure of the truth in him. A faithful preacher is an image of the truth, and fills the highest office known to humanity. His office is sacred, and he shares its sanctity by fidelity to it.

But still, I repeat that the true New Testament is the Law in the heart with all those who have it. To say that grace and truth came (or come) by JESUS CHRIST, is true; because grace and truth are personified in CHRIST. As personalities or personifications, *Moses* stands for the written Law, and CHRIST for the unwritten Law; but the unwritten Law is the *Spirit* of the written Law which, originally, came from and was founded in the unwritten Law, hence there is a particular beauty in supposing or regarding the written Scriptures as a living animal having a body and a soul, — water and spirit, — flesh and blood, — bread and wine; these all meaning the same thing, and all of them are represented by CHRIST as a mythical person, or rather a mysterious principle, but in no wise a person, as historically represented.

When CHRIST was represented as teaching, there was no written New Testament; and then the Old Testament was the water of Jacob's well,—which did

not fully quench the thirst; but it was originally a water that did quench the thirst: and this was the "living water," the *Spirit* under the letter, which CHRIST taught. But this was the doctrine of the Esenes, and nearly the whole of Philo's works are written from this point of view. The New Testament, having been added to the Old, the two now represent the water of Jacob's well; and we, of this age, need the same *Spirit* for understanding the whole, that was once necessary for reading the Old Testament by itself. This *Spirit* is not a historical event, nor does it depend upon a historical event; but it is what CHRIST called it, the SPIRIT of TRUTH. It can never be a thing of the past and become a historical record. It is a writing on the heart as expressed in Jeremiah.

There is much reason to believe that the promise of the New Covenant in *Jeremiah* xxxi:31-34, was misunderstood in the days of the Apostles. The verses read as follows:

31. Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Jacob:

31. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the days that I took them by the hand

to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD :

33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Here would seem to be a promise, or a prediction—behold, the days come, &c.—but as with God a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day, it is impossible to determine how near or how remote the time was to which the prophecy referred. As we look back historically from the present time, we may feel very sure that the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled in the world at large, though it may have been accomplished in the lives of individuals in every age, and may now be in fulfillment in the lives of many individuals. If we suppose this prophecy to refer to a period of the world-history, or liable to be so inter-

preted, and then look into the New Testament, we shall see very decided evidence that some of the writers thought the "days" had "come" when the prophecy was to be fulfilled.

The first indication of this occurs in the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*; in the former at *chapter xxiv*, in the latter at *chapter xxi*. We next see it in several passages of the Epistles of *St. Paul*, in one of which the Apostle expressly declares that "we shall not all sleep," &c.: for, as St. Paul saw the matter, some that were then living were to be *taken up* alive in the clouds, 1 *Thes.* iv: 17, &c. But in neither of these passages is there any express reference to the prediction in Jeremiah.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, however, the writer, in the *eighth chapter*, quotes the promise of Jeremiah; and the whole tenor of the Epistle shows that he thought the time had really arrived for its fulfillment; that the old law was done away, and that the HEBREWS, whom the writer addresses, were to live under the *law in the heart*, the new covenant, predicted by Jeremiah; and one of the principal objects of the writer was to exhort those he addressed to be faithful to the end. There is no appearance in this Epistle of a claim to supernatural light. Whoever was the author, he was a Jew, or Jewish Christian, and saw nothing beyond

the Jewish people. The Epistle is full of argument and exhortation based upon the Jewish Scriptures and traditions. It is one of the most solemn and impressive of all the Epistles of the New Testament. The aim to assimilate, in character, the High priest of the Sect to whom the Epistle is directed, to that of Melchisedec, is very remarkable. The latter is described as "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the SON of GOD," abiding a priest continually. But we must observe that the writer had no personal knowledge of the High priest, of whom so much is said. His faith was grounded in a full and possibly literal belief in the Old Testament, the records of which are freely used; and, next, in an opinion that one portion of ancient prophecy had been recently fulfilled; though for this opinion he depended upon a tradition expressed in these words: "which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him:"—not that the writer himself was a witness of anything connected with the advent of CHRIST. Another opinion pointed to the expectation of some termination of the world, in accordance with the opinions which seem to have been prevalent at that time.

The tone of this Epistle is extremely affecting and

unearthly. It is that of one who wrote as if he thought, indeed, that the last time had arrived, or was near at hand.

This opinion is not only seen in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, in the Epistles of St. Paul, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but it is most emphatically declared in the 1st *Epistle* of *Peter*, iv: vii, "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer:"—as if the event might be expected at any moment. If this be construed as referring to the end of the world, we know that the Apostles were mistaken; but if it be regarded as referring to that event which is "appointed" for all men, then, indeed, the "time is at hand" now, as it was, and will be, "world without end."

As I read the records, it appears to me indisputable, that the writers really thought the great world near its "end," when they wrote; and equally certain that this opinion had no little influence upon their writings; but now, while this opinion was not true, in regard to the macrocosm, it was true, and is yet true, with regard to the microcosm: for every man lives on the borders of the invisible world, from which he is separated by the thinnest of veils; which, in the estimate of some, may be pierced even in this life. A vision of this, in some form or other, is calculated more than

anything else in the world, to awaken the soul to a right understanding of the Law, both as it reads in the records and as it is in the spirit from which the law originally proceeded.

It is said that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; and it is perhaps no less true, that the fear of God often arises upon the contemplation of death, —the “end” of the phenomenal world.

It is of the utmost importance in reading the Scriptures to bear in mind this double character of the Law, written and unwritten, of which I have said so much; especially in reading the Psalms; for in a multitude of instances the unwritten Law is called the LORD. The LORD is that Law; and “Blessed are they whose God is the Lord.” These are the righteous also who are told “to rejoice before God,” and to “exceedingly rejoice.” The Kingdom of Heaven is a Kingdom of righteousness. It is not a place but a state of the soul. This is the New Jerusalem, the Land of Promise for those who keep the covenant.

The entire man is often spoken of in Scripture as a whole people; and the “prophet,” as I have repeatedly said, which is to arise among the “brethren,” is the SPIRIT of Truth rising among the other spiritual prin-

ciples in men; thoughts, passions and affections of all sorts.

The command to worship one God is a command to obey the one SPIRIT of TRUTH: the Lord is to be God—"Blessed are they whose God is the Lord." To be led by any other principle or spirit, is idolatry, or the worship of a false God; not that any passion is essentially evil in itself, but only when, from being a servant, it becomes a master.

The "Comforter," promised in the New Testament, called also the SPIRIT of TRUTH, is a repetition of the promise of the *Angel* in the Old Testament, or the promise of the *prophet*, to rise in the midst of the brethren. This is the *Spirit* which will lead its possessors into all Truth, *John* xvi: 13, meaning, as I have said, of itself; for it does not teach geometry or astronomy; and by teaching the *nature* of itself it will teach the *nature* of CHRIST; for CHRIST is that Spirit:—hence it is said, that it will *recall* all the words of Jesus, *John* xiv: 26.

There is a principle by which the teachings of CHRIST may be brought to "remembrance" even at this day, and throughout all time, which I will illustrate by a simple case; observing, however, that I have no design or desire to disparage the Spirit of Truth by comparing it with any subordinate principle. With

this remark I say, then, that *Euclid*, if he had pleased, after having demonstrated his principles of geometry, might have personified what I will call the Spirit of Science, and, by giving it a biography might have represented it as saying;—yet a little while I am with you and then I go to my father; but then I will send the Spirit of Science to you, and he shall bring to your “remembrance” all of the demonstrations you have heard from me. This sort of scientific remembrance is what *Plato* calls reminiscence, distinguishing it from the memory of external things; and very properly so: for a scientific mind, though memory is needful to it, does not depend upon memory for the principles of science. These principles exist in the reason and not in the memory, and they are developed in and from the reason in an invariable manner; so that if all the books of geometry in the world were to be destroyed, the same science would be re-written by some mind or minds imbued with the scientific spirit. Now, in a somewhat similar manner, the SPIRIT of TRUTH is a reality; and all men who are imbued with it, and who live with fidelity to it, have within themselves the workings of that *Spirit*, and in such a manner as to bring, as it were, to their “remembrance” the teachings of those who have gone before them with respect to the same *Spirit*. But, as in science

very few become eminently distinguished as discoverers, so, in regard to the Spirit of Truth there are but few leaders in the world. And, again, as a Scientific Spirit is aided in the development of science within itself by the writings of those who have gone before it, so, with regard to the Spirit of Truth, the writings of others may assist in bringing this Spirit to light within the student. For this purpose there is no book in the world that can be compared to the Bible; and, of the Bible, no portion of it that can be compared to the gospels. To make any progress in this species of Truth, it is necessary to be devoted to it, to live with it; or, as the gospel itself expresses it, it is necessary to obey or "do" the bidding of truth. A false man is necessarily debarred from it,—at all events so long as he clings to his idol, whatever it may be. The reason why the love of CHRIST is the root of a truly divine life, is because CHRIST is the SPIRIT of TRUTH personified, and the impersonation was made by the most spiritual body of men the world has ever seen.

It may be imagined that this view cannot possibly reach what are supposed to be the revelations of a future world in the gospels; but according to my reading of the gospels, I find in them no specific revelations of the future; but only general intimations of an immortal life, in harmony with the opinions of all

of the ancient sects of philosophy, that of *Epicurus* excepted. I say sects of philosophy, to exclude a few scattered individuals here and there who had extravagant opinions. In a future life CHRIST indeed indicates that the sheep are to be separated from the goats; but this has been the instinctive apprehension of all ages, and has its proper place even in Plato's Republic; but of the specific nature of the life of the good, CHRIST gives us no light, I mean no specific revelation. When questioned, as in *Matt.* xxii, as to the woman who had been the wife of seven brothers; the answer is negative and not positive. We are told that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. The relations of life, then, it would seem, are all broken up in the resurrection; for if there is no marrying nor giving in marriage, there are no parents, no children, no brothers, no sisters; and as to being like the angels of God in heaven,—since we know nothing of their state, we know nothing of the state of those in the resurrection. We assume that the angels of God are in some perfect state; but we know nothing of it, I mean from this revelation. On the other hand, such expressions as hell, hell-fire, the worm that never dieth, and the like,—these are so manifestly metaphorical that nothing is to be concluded from them but that the wicked are

destined to some inconceivable sufferings,—figured in the pagan world by pictures of Tartarus; of Ixion on his wheel, Sisyphus rolling his stone, &c. *St. Paul*, as if speaking with the authority of Holy Writ, tells us that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him; but he does not tell us what the things are:—and even that they are good, is rather an inference of our own instinct than a result of any positive Scriptural revelation. In such generalities I do not recognize a specific result, and am forced to conclude that it lay beyond the field, that is, beyond the power, of the writers to give us any; and that on this particular question the *written* revelation leaves us where it finds us. *St. Paul* himself, after quoting the letter of Scripture, as above, for the seeming purpose of shutting out all inquiry in that direction, appeals to the *Spirit* as having revealed a truth which the letter cannot give; and this is in keeping with the whole of his preaching. But whatever *Spirit* was accessible to *St. Paul* is accessible to all men, as he himself teaches, his preaching to the Gentiles being the practical proof of his opinion on this point.

As to the scene of the resurrection itself, it does not teach the immortality of man, but only that of the

SPIRIT of TRUTH, which cannot die out of the world. According to the tenor of the relation, literally understood, it can only prove the immortality of the SON of GOD. It establishes nothing for that of man, who is not, even upon the commonly received opinion, such a person as CHRIST.

But I forbear discussing this question any further from this point of view.



SECTION XV.

The Bible is full of symbolism. At first it is not easy to see it, but by practice and study, the letter falls into the shade, and the Spirit "comes forth." The truth of the Bible then becomes its own support, its own testimony of itself. Miracles cannot prove it, neither could miracles overthrow it. It lives by a life of its own. "Saving faith" is not a historical belief of it upon testimony, nor upon the credit of miracles; but it is the knowledge of its *Spirit*, its *soul*, its CHRIST; and this is at last seen to be eternal, and becomes the certainty of the immortality of the soul, the life of which is CHRIST. The mystery is to know it, and this, it is said, is not of the will of man.

The metaphorical character of the language of Scripture, though often asserted, and though examples of it have been often adduced, is very far from being generally understood. Hence, in many cases, what is said

in figurative language of the soul of man, is understood as if said of external phenomena, simply because the soul being unseen, visible objects are made use of to symbolize or to figure it. In all that is said in *Isaiah*, chapters xxxiv and xxxv, for example, the soul of man is the *country* spoken of;—in the one case the false man, upon whom the “vengeance of the Lord” is poured. In this false soul, the streams shall be turned into pitch, the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and

gather under her shadow : there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

Nothing of all this is said of any visible place on the face of the earth ; but it is a highly wrought metaphorical picture of a soul abandoned to an evil life, in forgetfulness of the LORD of TRUTH.

But then the prophet pictures another class of men, or another condition of soul ; a soul that has sought out and read the "Book of the Lord." Such a soul declares that "the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our Law-giver, the LORD is our king ; he will save us." Now this LORD must be understood to be the *Angel*, and the *prophet*, and the *Law in the heart* spoken of by *Moses*, and recognized by *St. Paul* as the Spiritual CHRIST, whose power of action in the soul is illustrated in the mythical history of JESUS.

Of those who seek and read, that is, understand and obey this Spirit, *Isaiah* says, speaking in the name of the LORD :

No one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate : for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand divided it unto them by line : they shall possess it forever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein. The wilderness and the solitary

place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

The wilderness and the desert here described is a human soul destitute of the TRUTH; but the presence of TRUTH is to work spiritual wonders. A soul visited by it,—shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

With something like an incoherency the prophet then seems to address the SPIRIT of TRUTH, as if prompting it what it is to say and do:

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a feeble heart,—Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even GOD with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind [in understanding] shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf [in understanding] shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man [who walks with “the crutch of tradition,”] leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb [the ignorant] shall sing: For in the wilderness [of the natural man] shall waters break out, and streams [the ‘living waters’ and streams of Truth] in the desert. And the parched ground [of the soul] shall

become a pool, and the thirsty land [the soul thirsty for Truth] springs of water: in the habitation of dragons [evil passions], where each lay shall be grass [fresh verdure], with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness, [in the soul]; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: [that is, for *those*, who have sought out, and read, and lived according to the LAW of the LORD]: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beasts shall go up thereon, [in such a soul], it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion [the Supreme Truth, the spiritual life], with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

No part of this is a prophecy of any particular time, or place, or person; but it is a highly figurative and metaphorical picture of contrasted states of the soul of man; one, given over to an evil life, becoming a wilderness and a desert, where the cormorant and the bittern shall dwell, the screech owl and the raven: the other, a soul where the TRUTH has taken up its abode, and made that wilderness to blossom as the rose, where there shall be no ravenous beast; and *these* are

called the ransomed of the LORD, who shall obtain joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

If the language of *Isaiah* is supposed to point to places on the earth, which are to be "for ever and ever," then, it may be asked, where are they, or where have they ever been seen? But apply this descriptive language to the souls of men in contrasted states, as they are buried in sin, or clothed with righteousness, and nothing can exceed its supreme beauty or surpass its fearful truthfulness.

The Scriptures are full of this figurative language, and to be absolutely convinced of the necessity of interpreting the letter into reality, we need only read the concluding verses of Mark's Gospel. After the command to preach the gospel to every creature, it is promised; And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

The necessity of escaping from the evident consequences of this language in Mark, literally understood, has induced the plea that the promise was confined to

the time of the Apostles,—but the promise was not to the Apostles, but to *believers*: and the promise was undoubtedly intended for all time; but if it is to be taken literally, there is not now a believer in existence! for who can do these wonders? But if we understand that, by the power of TRUTH the bad passions may be expelled as *devils*; that the Truth gives a new tongue to the false; that the Truth is a protection against wicked men, who may be called serpents; and no less against the poison of a false doctrine, which is deadly drink; and that the same principle is a cure for moral disorders and sicknesses of all kinds; then, there may be many believers in the world, and some will be found among the most humble and the poor of the earth, who may nevertheless be rich in the Spirit.

The 16th chapter of *Matthew* furnishes a plain argument against the reality of the two miracles of feeding the multitude, (the five thousand and the four thousand), with a few loaves and fishes, and it is of great importance; because, if we can clearly see a case in the gospel itself of a symbolic interpretation, we may consider that we have direct authority for it in understanding other miracles in the same spirit. The point deserves particular examination.

In this 16th *chapter of Matthew*, CHRIST warns his disciples, whom I suppose to have been *Essenes*, against "the *leaven* of the *Pharisees* and of the *Sadducees*." This his followers could not understand (v. 7). He then instructs them as to his meaning, by reminding them of the two miracles, by which thousands were fed with a few loaves and fishes, and he exclaims: How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not of bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the DOCTRINE of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, *verses* 11, 12.

This is exceedingly instructive, if we choose to profit by it. It is as plain as the noon-day sun, that the miracles of feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes is a symbolic (written or spoken) miracle, to show that *doctrine*, that is, TRUTH may feed thousands and not be diminished. If the two miracles had been performed with *bread*, a reference to them could not have instructed the disciples that by the *leaven* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees was to be understood DOCTRINE. The five, and the four thousand, then, were fed upon *doctrine*; and undoubtedly this was not the doctrine of the two recognized sects, and the only other doctrine that we know anything about among

the Jews was that of the *Essenes*. This doctrine was to the Essenes *the bread of life*, and this is CHRIST, as the SPIRIT of TRUTH, personified in JESUS. There was no miracle in the case, and we need see nothing in the story but an example of the Essene mode of symbolic teaching; and symbolism was resorted to because the writers of the gospels, like modern masons were under the most solemn oath not to reveal openly their doctrines; not to throw pearls to swine, and not to give the children's bread, that is, the Essene doctrine of the Spirit, to the dogs; and who were the dogs but the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who had buried the truth in their ceremonies and traditions?

[Since writing the above, it has been suggested, that the reference by Jesus to the two miracles was designed as a rebuke to the disciples for the uneasiness implied in *verse 5*, because they had "forgotten to take bread;" as if they ought to have known that he could supply a want of that kind without limit. But we might rather conclude that the allusion to the want of bread (*verse 5*) was artistically introduced for the express purpose of furnishing an occasion to point out the true character of the miracles. The course of the teaching is this: *verse 5* contains the allusion to the want of bread; *verse 6* contains the distinct caution

against the *leaven* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees; *verse* 7 shows that this allusion to *leaven* was precisely what the disciples misunderstood, supposing that it referred to bread; *verse* 8 contains the rebuke, directed expressly against this precise misunderstanding; *verses* 9 and 10 remind the disciples of the miracles, and *verse* 11 shows that the object of this reference to the miracles was to correct the mistake of the disciples in supposing that the caution had any reference to bread,—Jesus following up the allusion to the miracles, by expressly instructing the disciples that it was to teach them that “he spake it not concerning bread;” and lastly, *verse* 12 shows that the disciples then made the intended inference: “how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees:” and in the truth of this inference Jesus allows them to remain, making no further explanation. As the record has come down to us, the inference is imperative that the feeding of the multitudes with a few loaves and fishes were symbolic parables, and not miracles, the multitudes having been fed with *doctrine*; a single word of Truth being capable of feeding thousands without diminution. We see very plainly how this operates in truths of science. An important truth takes possession of a single mind,—as we see it did,

for example, in the case of Sir Isaac Newton. That Truth, as a *leaven*, has penetrated the whole modern world, and may be said rather to have increased than to have been diminished by the millions that have been fed by it. Now, all Truth is of this nature; and this is what the two miracles, regarded as parables, were designed to teach; only we must see in them Jewish teaching concerning the Hebrew Scriptures, which the Essenes regarded as containing an external and an internal sense, figured by *loaves* and *fishes*. From this point of view the teaching is very beautiful:—but the miracles, if taken literally, really teach nothing at all, and are only addressed to our faculty for the marvellous. Seen from this latter point of view, what are these miracles but the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, which we are warned to beware of?

Let us, then, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, and follow the SPIRIT of TRUTH, which made *St. Paul* free. This Leaven of the Sadducees and of the Pharisees was, in St. Paul's view, the *Hagar* of the allegory of *Abraham* and his two wives; and hence he said that *Hagar* is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to *Jerusalem* which now is, and is in bondage with her children; that is, the SPIRIT of TRUTH, in St. Paul's view, was buried by the priesthood in *Jerusalem* under an oppressive ceremonial

law; and this was undoubtedly the opinion of the Essenes whose *leaven* was the SPIRIT of TRUTH, the office of which was to relieve those who might attain to it from "the bondage of the Law,"—not by an uncontrollable licence or liberty from the Law, but by enabling its followers to give an intelligent obedience to it, founded upon a knowledge of the Spirit of the Law; and this is CHRIST now, as it was before *Abraham*.

I will repeat here, before closing this section, that miracles cannot teach or certify the character of the worker of them, beyond the single point, that he may have an extraordinary power: but whether that power be at the disposal of a beneficent or malevolent being, the working of miracles cannot establish. The doing of good by miracles is no security against the suspicion of an underlying purpose of ultimate deception. When Christ asks for faith in himself, because he does the works of the Father, *John* x: 38, he does not appeal to external miracles, as we may be very certain by this simple consideration; that the appeal implies that those he addressed were already acquainted with the Father, and with his works. Now, the assumed object of Christ's coming was to reveal the Father; to reveal the very knowledge his appeal supposes already in

those he addressed. He says, first, believe me for mine own sake; but next, if you will not believe in me for my own sake, then believe in me for the works' sake. What now is the true meaning of this appeal to the followers of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH? It is plainly this: Christ speaks in the name of the Spirit of Truth. He was set forward for that purpose by those who had a transcendent conception of that Spirit. Now, that Spirit has indeed and in fact a species of supernatural power in the soul where it finds entertainment, where it finds reception. It works moral miracles in such a soul; and the appeal by Christ was designed to awaken the conviction that the workings of so blessed a power must needs be divine, since it does the works of the Father,—the soul which is conscious of such works being instinctively conscious, at the same time, that such works are the very works of the Father. The appeal is, first, to the Spirit of Truth itself; that is, believe me for mine own sake; but next, if you cannot recognize the divinity of this spirit in itself, then, observe its works (in the soul) and believe for the works' sake.

Much of this mode of speaking by Christ may be translated by simply giving a tongue, as it were, to the conscience, and then listening to what it says. Harken to me, it says: I speak not of myself; I

speak only the words I hear from my Father. If you love me, you will keep my commandments, and then you shall know whether the doctrine I teach be of myself or of the Father that sent me. Then you shall know that I am in the Father and the Father in me. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice. Obey my voice, and then we shall all be one; as the Father is in me, and I in the Father, that you also may be one in us. The words that I speak, they are spirit and they are life. Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Take my yoke, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

This yoke is easy when the soul acts from within outwards; but it is a burden when the duty is imposed from without, whether it be in the name of Moses or that of Christ. In the passages above recited I suppose the conscience is simply personified in Christ

In the Proverbs of the Old Testament the same principle speaks in the character of wisdom personified. My son, if thou wilt receive my words [these are the words of Christ in the Spirit], and hide my commandments with thee [the commandments of Christ], * * then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord [the same Christ]; and find the knowledge of God [that is, the knowledge of the Father]. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. To those who do not listen, what is the language? Because I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a desolation; and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you.

In both portions of Scripture, the same spirit speaks. That an actual person or persons used the language is true, of course, or we should not find it written; but that the speaker or writer in either case was above humanity we need not suppose. It is not of primary importance to know by whom or when the language was used, except as a question of mere history; but it is of unspeakable importance to recognize the spirit of the

language. That Spirit is Christ; the wine of the water, the blood of the flesh, the spirit of the letter: and this every man must find in himself, or he will never find it without him.

SECTION XVI.

The first recorded controversies in the Church, out of the New Testament—for there were controversies among the disciples, *Paul* “withstanding” *Peter*, and quarrelling with *Barnabas*,—appear to have been as to the person of *JESUS*. I assume that, with the *Essenes*, he was not a person, in the miraculous portion of his history; but a personification: not but that there was, or might have been, a real person around whom the myth was thrown. But the real person was a man, for we know nothing of any person or any being above man in the universe except God, and God is infinitely inexpressible in the visible form of man. The myth clothes the man with an ideal history, constituting, as a whole, a divine parable; and for the purpose of teaching, there is no more need of a real history underlying it, than in the episodical parables within the history, such as the story of the Prodigal

Son. In process of time, as I repeat, the myth passed into an accredited history in the popular mind, which brought about a controversy as to the person of JESUS.

For ages the Christian world has been taught to look upon those who sought to retain the *idea*, and not cumber it with an extravagant and impossible history, as heretics and infidels.

Hence the character of the Gnostics, and of the Marcionites and others, who were called heresiarchs, because they were shocked with the story, literally understood, of a carnal cohabitation of the eternal God with a mortal woman, howsoever delicately covered over with specious words. But they were outnumbered and outvoted in a question where it is quite possible that the opinion of one single man of insight may be worth that of many millions of ordinary men. The tendency of the mind seems always to be to give prominence to the visible, and in the same proportion to deny the invisible; and this tendency culminates in the tragedy on Mount Calvary, for it kills the Spirit.

Then arise such men as *Isaiah*, who, trumpet-tongued, call men back to simpleness and truth. The 'Holy one of Israel' (*Isaiah*, i: 4,) is not a historical person, but the Spiritual CHRIST in every man; and this Holy one is always in danger of being smothered

with external observances; then, as I say, an Isaiah rises and cries out:

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: [and the Lord is the Spirit of Truth, finding utterance through Isaiah.] I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? [What boldness was expressed in this language; for these things *had been* required by the assumed prophet of God, *Moses* himself. Here was a reformer, one of the boldest that ever raised his voice against superstitious observances having the seeming sanction of God, and consecrated by immemorial usage. Let us listen to him.]

Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide

mine eyes from you : yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood.

[And what is the improvement upon all this, commanded by *Isaiah* ?]

Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Almost the entire book of *Isaiah* is a cry to " turn " away from evil, to good ; but like all Scripture writers he uses metaphorical language.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

In all this I see but one single man spoken of. The last days are the last days of every man ; not the end of the world, but the close of a phenomenal life, which

comes to every man. This one man is called the Lord's house. He is sometimes called the Temple of God. In this house, as we read, there is the mountain of the Lord, which shall be exalted above all other internal principles in man; or, as it is expressed in the New Testament, to this principle, every knee shall bow. The same man is the house of the God of Jacob; and the mountain is the Lord, and it is the Angel, the Prophet, the Word in the heart, which shall "teach" the way of Truth; in the same man is Zion, for this is the same mountain, from which shall go forth the same law, the "word of the Lord" from "Jerusalem;" and Jerusalem is the same man, the Jerusalem that *St. Paul* saw in bondage.

If we do not bring these sayings home to ourselves; if we do not realize their application to us, and appropriate them, we might as well hear them in a language wholly unknown to us.

An individual, looking upon the entire volume, the Bible, is apt to measure the possibility of writing such a book by the sense he may have of his own inability to have produced it; and hence he may readily fall into the notion of a supernatural agency in its production. But we should consider that the Bible is not the product of an individual, but that of a whole people,

expressing the *Spirit* of ages. Besides, individuals are rarely capable of estimating the powers of each other; but this is no reason for denying those powers. One man may be unable to produce a single couplet of measured verse, but he may see those around him writing with ease whole pages of it; and yet, the whole human race has produced but one *Shakespeare*. Why should the race have produced more than one *Moses*?

One of the most usual reasons for supposing a supernatural origin to the Bible is the fact that the sacred volume does really contain or express a wonderful amount of Truth, the reality of which is found in life. As this truth is really in the Bible, the question arises, how did it get there? and the answer nearest at hand to explain this mystery, is that some superior Being must have had an agency in it—since we know that we did not put it there ourselves. But, in fact, the proper inference to be drawn from the presence of truth so wonderfully applicable to man is, simply, that the Bible came from man, who, alone, of all the beings known to us in the world, could by possibility have known the truths which are written in the Bible. The more exact and precise the conformity is, between that which is written and that which we observe in life, the more certain is it,

that the Book was written by man; that is, by men, for the Bible is the work of many men.

We may suppose that by far the largest portion of the Bible was written by men well advanced in life, and who had kept an observant eye upon their own experience and upon the external life of others. When such men reach a certain age, they are sure to come into the presence of a dark and mysterious shadow, the effect of which is to disclose the vanity of much of what has passed for real life, and to awaken, at the same time, an inner consciousness of another sort of life, which finally begins to take shape in the soul and become a measure or rule by which to make a re-estimate of all prior judgments of things. It is not to be supposed that the experience of such men can be seen into by those who have never as yet known anything of it; while they, however, may not have lost their sense of the state or condition of others. In short, the more advanced naturally become the teachers and guides of those yet behind them, in the order of time, and these as naturally look up to the aged and receive their lessons of wisdom as from a higher world.

An elderly man's experience and observation, happily combined, does really place him in a position to reveal many things to 'the younger sort,' and in this sense the Bible is a revelation of life. It stands over

most men as an elder man over youth; but the real life of the Bible is the life of man nevertheless, and there can be no other key to it than life. For this reason the Bible is a sealed book to most men, and must remain so; and it will continue to be regarded as the work of a supernatural being, simply because it originated in an experience beyond the ordinary experience of man. Still, I look upon this opinion as a species of idolatry, and as being calculated to separate us from the benefits of the book by closing up the avenue for its entrance into the soul by a preternatural excitement of the sense of the marvellous.

Of the two directions in which most men look for guidance, the Bible or a living church, it is really a matter of doubt which is the most likely to cramp the soul least, and leave it a possibility for escape into the free empyrean. If the Church could always be imbued with the Spirit of Truth and of wisdom, the decision would be in favor of the Church; but as the Church must be composed of men, subject to the weaknesses of man, it may fall lamentably away from grace, even to the point of crucifying the very spirit of grace and truth,—which I am certain is exactly what is taught by the life, persecution, and death of Christ. On the other hand, a written volume is necessarily a dead letter in some respects, incapable of explaining itself,

and liable, as we see the Bible is, to misinterpretation in a thousand ways,—of which the Protestant world is a living evidence. Perhaps if we could look behind both the Church and the Bible, we might see the working of a perfect spirit, the true Logos, the ever-living Spirit of Truth, in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and who doeth all things well, “ordering all things in measure, and number, and weight.”

Let it be granted that religion is the most elevated and the most profound subject that can engage the faculties of man; let language be exhausted in setting forth its inexpressible mystery and immeasurable importance; still, as “there must be somewhere in nature such an order of being as man,” so must man exhibit in his history expressions of his religious nature of the highest order possible to that nature; and such expressions, from the nature of the case, must transcend the powers of the generality of the race; while, nevertheless, there must be something in the religious nature of every man to which such expressions are addressed, and in which they must find their verification, so far as they are true. In this direction I find, as I have said, the mystical unity of the Alpha and Omega in the

human race, in which all writings originate, and by which they must be judged.

No doubt there are difficulties in this subject, the real root of which has been sufficiently indicated by the divine man *Moses* where he forbids the worship of images, and prohibits the attempt to represent the invisible by carved work of any sort; by which we may be instructed to regard the writings of *Moses* themselves as presenting us but mere shadows of the ineffable one. It is a violation of his own injunction, to erect those writings into idols. They are instrumental not final instructions, as we sufficiently see by the additions made to them in subsequent ages, including the gospels, though these are admitted to be the most wonderful productions of their kind in the world.

But, just in proportion to their wonderful character and importance are we called upon to look carefully into them, though this should be done with clean hands, and with hearts open before God. We cannot understand these writings unless we examine them with freedom; neither can we profit by them wisely, except so far as we understand them, and receive them for what they are: and, above all, we should endeavor to receive them in their spirit; for *CHRIST* did not speak idly when he taught his disciples that the flesh profiteth nothing.

SECTION XVII.

We read much, in the older writings of the world, of man, as a microcosm. He is called a little world; and every man, in the course of his life, is said to live over or repeat the world's history. The beginning of the world is the birth of man; and the end of the world is his death: but the end of the world, in this sense, is not said to be the end of life, for life has no end. The idea of the microcosm is expressed by Moses, where we read:—Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. * * So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

The word image, as it is translated, served Moses, instead of the word microcosm; but the latter served the ancient philosophers for expressing the same thing.

Man is, first, the image of his race, the image of humanity; and next, in a higher sense, he is the image

of God. Hence the expressions,—I am a man, and whatsoever interests man interests me: and, again, I am a child of God, and God's interests are mine.

From something like this as a starting point, as it were, we may conclude that everything in the Bible has a relation to the reader of it. The reader of the Bible may understand, I say, that in reading the sacred volume, he is reading about himself,—about his own nature, which is the image of the race and the image of God: and this is equally true, within the meaning of the above definitions, whether the Bible be supposed to have a human or a divine origin.

From this point of view the student, the lover of Truth, prevailed by the Spirit of Truth, may commence his interpretations of the Sacred volume, using for this purpose both his head and his heart, his intellect and his affections, [the moral sun and moon, the true “male and female, created he them,”] between which, in the end there ought to be no disharmony. He may feel perfectly certain that there is nothing in the holy book but what interests him; nothing foreign or strange to him, if he can but rightly understand it. Let him call upon the Spirit of Truth ‘to open his eyes and unstop his ears,’ and go forward with a perfect conviction that it cannot be to his advantage to live in a delusion of any sort. In the interpretation of the

Bible there can be but one reason for preferring one sense or understanding of it to another; and that is its Truth.

In opening the Sacred volume, the first passages we meet with purport to give a history of Creation, in which God is represented as working six days; and, as if fatigued, he rests on the seventh. In this account a great man * of the last century saw something so manifestly inapplicable to the Deity, that he placed this portion of Scripture, without hesitation, in the class of symbolic writings, upon a theory which he called the doctrine of correspondence. Upon this view, the great Swede, to whom the world is more indebted than it has yet discovered, regarded the opening verses of Genesis, not as a literal account of the creation of the natural world, but as a symbolic history of the regeneration of man; and he has furnished us a minute interpretation of these verses from this point of view. This should at least rescue these passages from the scorn of the scoffer.

But as symbolism is a species of hieroglyphic representation, it may admit of more than one interpretation, and be equally true in more senses than one. Hence it has been suggested that the verses in ques-

* Swedenborg.

tion originated among a people who saw the world, as it were, created anew every year, by the passage of the sun from the vernal to the autumnal equinox; in the course of which, six months, called days, were regarded as months of labor; to be closed by a harvest month of rest from labor as a Sabbath; a day of thanks to the giver of all good for the blessings of the agricultural season. Upon this idea we see, in Genesis, the successive order of productions,—after the breaking up of the winter chaos,—commencing with grass and the herb yielding seed; then the moving creature that hath life, needing vegetable sustenance; and at last man, who lives upon all the other products of the earth. A critical reader may find no small support to this interpretation by the almost admission of it to be found in the 21st verse of the 34th chapter of *Exodus*: Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: *in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest*: as if earing time and the harvest month at the close of the season, was the true Sabbath of thanks; called a day, in the institution of a weekly festival as a “shadow,” or image of it. This interpretation is not without its beauty, and may equally with the other relieve us from the embarrassment which cannot but result from a literal reading of the first verses of Genesis.

At first view, the possibility of a variety in the significations of a symbol may seem to diminish its value: it may seem to lose something of directness and precision. But this will be seen, on farther examination, to be a strong recommendation for its use in teaching "things out of sight," where direct images must always be more or less deceptive. In history, the facts cannot be too precisely stated; but in illustrating the invisible, this sort of precision is impossible, that is, by sensuous imagery; and if attempted, it must carry the attention away from the subject matter. From a very early period, on this account, the **SUN** has been taken as a symbol for the **REASON** or for the intellect, and the **MOON** for the **AFFECTIONS**: and they have been used also respectively for **TRUTH** and for **FAITH**; one giving light in the *day* of prosperity, the other in the *night* of adversity; and when this mode of teaching is recognized, a discovery of its beauty and truth go hand in hand together; for "truth is always beautiful." All sacred writings, when the design has been to teach unseen principles, must be regarded from some point of view similar to this, or they must remain incomprehensible, the external dress being the mere shell of an unseen kernel; a seed of which must be in the student. That the first verses of Genesis belong to this class of writings there can be no doubt.

After passing these opening verses, we come to the grand parable of man, commencing his career in the garden of Eden; and we read of his "first disobedience, and of the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe, with loss of Eden, till one greater man restore us, and regain the blissful seat."

I regard it as a grievous loss to good taste, and to truth, to look upon this story as anything but an allegory, a divine allegory. Its beauty as an allegory exceeds that of any professed poem that has ever been offered to the study of man.

What is this beautiful garden of Eden, but God's own beautiful world, into which man is supposed to be born in a state of innocence, the innocence of childhood? He tastes of the forbidden fruit; but he does not die physically, as would seem to be threatened. He dies morally. It is the death of the widow's son, an "only son." Let the reader keep one eye upon life, and the other upon the story, and observe how one is the copy of the other. What is it to taste of the forbidden fruit, but to do violence to that internal monitor, whose office it is to say, thou shalt not? Thou shalt not—what? thou shalt not eat, that is, thou shalt not *do* what I forbid; for in the day thou dost, I will send thee forth from paradise, and I will

stand at the gate thereof, armed with a flaming sword, to prevent thy return.

We may now see the internal monitor taking many forms expressive of the nature of man, and passing under many names in the sacred volume: for there is in truth but one subject in the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation included; and that is MAN; not, indeed, as an individual, but as a nature. If the student keeps his inward eye steadily upon itself, which is himself, he may see that nature as it is expanded in the great world, and also as it is shadowed out in the Bible; the Bible being a unity, not because it was planned and executed under a single conception, but because the nature of man is one.

The grand subject of the Bible, as Milton has told us, is the fall and the restoration of man. Let us make a brief abstract of this phase of the story.

It does not matter what the particular 'disobedience' may be which sends man forth from paradise. It is therefore beautifully symbolized by a forbidden fruit. The eating of the fruit is 'disobedience;' and the consequence is the symbolic death of the monitor. But now let us see how this monitor treats the man. By the violation of the sense of duty, this sense becomes the angel, as I have said, with the flaming sword at the gate of paradise. The garden of innocence

has been left by the act of disobedience, and a return to the garden becomes impossible by a moral necessity, by which, as it has been often said, a conscious sinner would be out of place and unhappy even in heaven.

Among heathen fables, this same principle is figured by the dragon which guards the entrance into the garden of the Hesperides; and we ought to recognize the common idea pervading many of these ancient fables; for in this way one representation illustrates another, and serves to establish the true meaning.

The man, now, having left the garden of Eden, must enter into the land of Egypt, the land of bondage, the land of darkness; and he has before him the wilderness to pass, under the guidance of the offended principle, which assumes the form of a lawgiver; the Moses of this divine poem of life. For when the divine law within dies, by an act of disobedience, it seizes upon the offender from without, in the form of a master.

The man now becomes a whole people, the Israelites; and under the lead of Moses, the image of the external law, the internal law having died, the people commence a return to the Land of Promise; which is only another name for the garden of innocence, which the man had left. He is carried to Mount Sinai, to hear the Law amidst thunders and lightning. This had become necessary, because the man had not lis-

tened to the same Law when it spake to him in the still small voice. Thus, the angel with the flaming sword is Moses and Mount Sinai; and this mysterious Being is no less the Lord: but he is not recognized as such, because, for a time, the eyes of the man are "holden."

The man now passes through various adventures in the wilderness, the wilderness signifying the state of the man under the external Law. This is the "gloomy wood" in which Dante found himself in the "midway" of his "mortal life." The man is now supposed to be engaged in "the wars of the Lord," a book of which would seem to be lost. But we have a substitute for it in those exterminating wars which necessarily preceded the return of the wanderer to the Land of Promise. For these wars signify the conflict of the good principles in man with the evil principles; for the latter must be destroyed before the Land of Promise can be possessed.

But *Moses* does not enter the Land of Promise; which signifies that, under the Law, no man enters the Kingdom of Heaven. Hence the declaration of CHRIST to *Nicodemus*, except a man be born of water *and* the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven: for, in this declaration, the water is the external Law, the flesh that profiteth nothing; that is, without the Spirit,

without the life, the CHRIST of the Law. Therefore the man under the guidance of *Moses* reaches only a *Pisgah* view of the Land of Promise: This is signified, I say, by the death of *Moses* without entering it.

The Land of Promise is not under the law of bondage, but under the law of freedom, where the Angel with the flaming sword, after executing his mission as the external Law in the form of *Moses*, becomes the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL; and finally, the Salvation of Man, the CHRIST of the New Testament,—who has throughout this eventful history been an ever present Spirit; the “word in the heart,” the guiding “Angel,” speaking in God’s “name,” the “prophet,” like unto *Moses*;—an ever-present Spirit, I say, in the world, the microcosm, reconciling the man to God, his loving Father; who would not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This is the indispensable condition of a return to innocence, the only Heaven for the soul of man; and this is symbolized by childhood: verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

This idea of seeing the great in the small or the

small in the great; man in nature and nature in man; is no new thing in the world. Plato's Republic, as I have taken occasion to say elsewhere, is one man, the Grand-man: and no loving student of Goethe need be told that Faust and Mephistopheles are the same person, in whom was also a purer nature than either.

"Man's triune nature shadowed forth one sees
 In Gretchen, Faust, and Mephistopheles :
 The INTELLECTUAL, to the gods that links him ;
 The SENSUAL, that 'midst dust and demons sinks him ;
 The MORAL, blending purity, and love,
 Guileless, unselfish, with forgiveness teeming,
 Beautifying, sanctifying, all-redeeming,
 Drawing his spirit to the realms above !

It may seem strange, at first, to one who is not accustomed to regard principles underlying sensuous representations, to meet with a rule of interpretation which assumes in man, not as a phenomenal individual, but as a nature, an ADAM, a MOSES, and a CHRIST; but it is certain that these mysterious beings have their origin and their significance in the nature of man. Except from some such view as this, the Bible does not seem to speak to me; but from this principle I find in the Sacred volume inexhaustible treasures. It is a study of life and for life. It is a sacred volume, speaking of and to the nature of man. Its principles

are within us, and as we see them truly, we are assisted to the knowledge of ourselves, which has always been considered an attainment of the highest worth.

As a merely written volume however, some of the wisest men of the world in times past, have pronounced the Bible a dangerous book. St. Paul is not the only authority for this ; but Christ, the personified Spirit of Truth, made the same declaration in the words, the flesh profiteth nothing ; but the words which the Spirit speaks in the soul, they are truth and they are life. But even this declaration, seen only in the written word, has its danger, and has without doubt been the occasion of no little fanaticism ; because men do not sufficiently “try the spirits” to discover the true from the false, and are deluded by merely metaphorical expressions.

SECTION XVIII.

A distinction has been set forth in recent times between theology and religion, which is both true and important. The former term is easily defined; but I know of no adequate definition of religion. Theology is busy about the history of religious manifestations, and includes also all philosophical speculations about religion itself, while the latter expression seems to elude all attempts to define it; possibly because it is an original principle, and must be apprehended for itself, or it is not apprehended at all. It may be named, but cannot be defined.

Piety seems to be the emotional side of religion, and it is chiefly through emotions that religion is contemplated. True and genuine piety, in this sense, may be seen in very early life, and at all periods of life; often in those who have never heard of a discussion on the historical questions connected with the Bible, and

also where no doubts have ever been raised about miracles. It may lead a struggling life even with these doubts, and survive them, no matter how determined; thus giving a most practical proof that piety, or religious emotion, does not depend upon the solution of intellectual problems, and will survive every determination which the speculative reason may arrive at on religious questions.

With minds so constituted, however, especially when unexercised in dialectics, it is usual to mistake the ground of such emotions, and to attribute them to historical beliefs; and then it is, that the slightest show of danger to these seems to threaten piety itself. But we might just as reasonably be alarmed for our feelings of friendship for those we love, on being told that the story of the two pythagorean friends is probably a fable: or, we might as rationally imagine that the sublimity of a rising sun, or the splendor of his setting, is in danger, from the astronomic theory or science certifying that he does not move. There is nothing more common than to mistake the occasion of a feeling for its cause; as, to mention a single instance which may include all, when we imagine the Bible to be the cause of religion instead of its being a product of it.

There is no emotion possible to the human heart that can compare in beauty with a pure religious affec-

tion; but it is a mistake to imagine that any such affection depends upon a belief in the miracles attributed to Jesus. On the contrary, in proportion as the soul dwells upon *particulars*, with regard to Jesus, restricted to a certain period of time, it must be in danger of losing that sense of CHRIST which makes his presence possible to a believing heart. CHRIST is an ever-present Spirit, very particularly talked about and written about, some eighteen centuries since; but no more then in the world than now.

I must add that there are a great many questions connected with this subject, belonging to the theology side of it, the product of modern creeds and theories about religion, and which, as they do not arise from a plain and candid reading of the gospels, so neither can they be settled by the gospels; except, as the gentlemen of the law say, by throwing them out of court. When we see the church so divided and often engaged in angry controversy within itself, one is tempted to ask,—what has really been revealed? But most of the questions raised in the church belong to what are called side issues, and their determination may be impossible in the nature of things. Many questions seem to have arisen having little else to depend upon than some misapprehension of a word, metaphorically used. What is the *blood* of CHRIST but the Spirit of CHRIST;

and what is this, but the SPIRIT of TRUTH? The historical shedding of Christ's blood is a mythical representation of that suffering which the spirit of every man passes through in its "combats" with what is called the world and its temptations. Thus Christ is said to have been made perfect through suffering, *Heb.* ii: 10; and it is certainly a mistake to imagine that his suffering can supply the place of such trials as the common lot of humanity imposes upon all of us; by which the "gold" is said to be "tried" as "in a fire." His life is a model for us; but he did not suffer for us in a literal sense. He may, indeed, be said to have suffered for us as an exemplar, if he was a man, and not a supernatural being, in so far as we are taught by his life the power of Truth to carry the soul by the virtue of humility through the heaviest trials that can be inflicted upon the outward man. This was a model idea with those who wrote the gospels. Hence we see the personified humanity uttering that climax of all prayer; O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt, *Matt.* xxvi: 39. If we could but learn the true sense of this prayer; if we could but appropriate this one prayer by a true insight into the nature of it, we should see that there is no affliction possible to the human side of man which his divine side is not capable of rising

above ; not, indeed by its own power, but by the power of God, becoming available through humility. But this lesson can hardly be taught to those who suppose that Christ suffered, in a literal sense, in their stead, and who fancy themselves free to rejoice because another has been afflicted !

I know very well that this dogma does not always work precisely in this manner ; but this is the logic of the question, and it is only evaded by the fact that the logic of feeling is too strong for that of the head in most cases, so that the true nature of the question is swallowed up in an immense feeling of gratitude, the beauty of which stands for a solution of all difficulties.

Much anxiety might be saved to many if they could only understand the various senses in which words are used in the Scriptures, for the same word is not always used in the same sense. Unless we can understand the meaning of the words in reference to the passages in which they occur, how can we expect to comprehend the passages themselves ? Thus the word faith may sometimes be used for belief, and then, again, for quite another thing. Faith is not a mere historical belief. This sort of belief is of the "flesh," as explained heretofore, and is without "life." A true faith in a Bible relation carries its own evidence with it, and is the

"blood," or the Truth of it. This is the reason why Christ says, that we must not only eat of his flesh, but drink of his blood, or we have no life in us. St. Paul's *faith*, means St. Paul's *Truth*. It is his doctrine, or what, in some places, he calls *his* gospel. With many, faith takes the name of trust, or this for that; but trust supposes some prior conviction. Thus, we may be convinced of the goodness of God, and then *trust* in it. In this sense many have what they call faith in the Scriptures. They feel assured of their divine character, or origin, from external testimony or authority, and then *trust* in them. This is not the *faith*, I am bold enough to say, which St. Paul preached; for the "faith he preached," *Romans* x: 8, was not a simple belief in the Scriptures, to which, in their *letter*, it is hardly too strong an expression to say, he was hostile. He preached the faith, that is, the Spirit, or, in one word, the Christ of the Scriptures, and had "no confidence in the flesh," *Phil.* iii: 3. We should learn the sense in which words are used before we undertake to build up a doctrine upon them.

Of works, also, one class must be referred to the law; simply a compliance with the ceremonies, &c., prescribed by the law. Such works as these were, again, of the flesh, performed under a mere belief founded upon authority; but when performed under

the influence of faith, as above explained, they had the character of the faith, which was their SPIRIT. But faith, in the highest sense, is the same as the Spirit of Truth; and this was the saving faith of those who preceded the advent of Christ; and it saved those who had it, because it was Christ, when known under the name of the Holy one of Israel. To possess the Spirit of Truth, and to confide in it, is to have faith in this sense, whatever name it may bear; and then it is, that faith and works unite, and works are not then works of the law, but of the gospel. This is the faith which is counted as righteousness.

The importance of faith in the Scriptures is the importance of Truth itself; and the importance of belief in the Scriptures arises from this, that such belief is often the parent of faith; but until this faith is attained, mere belief is a bondage, or has no more merit than a belief in the history of Rome or any other history; yet, and here is an apparent contradiction, when faith is obtained, belief is no longer of value, and like "Christ in the flesh," may be left "behind;" or, like Hagar, may be sent into the wilderness.

It was in this state that St. Paul made the declaration: Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more: a declaration which

is altogether inexplicable, as it seems to me, except upon the view here presented. We may well keep in mind, that St. Paul calls his gospel a mystery, and that St. Peter saw in his Epistles some things hard to be understood. This may in no small degree be due to the different senses in which the same word may be used in different passages. Thus, in *Philippians*, iii: 3, it is certain, as I have urged, that by the *flesh*, *St. Paul* referred to the flesh of CHRIST, as seen in the Law and the ceremonies of the Jewish religion; the 'mystery' being Christ, as the spirit of the law, or of the Jewish religion. But in other passages the word *flesh* is used to signify the works of the devil, through the carnal affections of man. The same 'mystery' is to see the Church as the Body of Christ, or to see Christ in the Church as its true Spirit, which lives, as I say, in every faithful pastor throughout Christendom, in whom the Spirit of Truth resides: not because of a historical past, but, on the contrary, in this spirit the true nature of the past may be seen as in a mirror. It is the duty of a clerk to read the Scriptures to us; but it is the office of a Teacher to tell us what they mean: and this is the office of CHRIST, the Spirit of Truth, who gives us the water turned into wine. Every true Christian Pastor is an incarnation of the Holy one of Israel.

I cannot suppose that the opinions expressed in this volume will be acceptable to those who see christianity only through the mere denominational forms and ceremonies of modern times. I admit, however, that the Spirit of Christ may be found in all or most of these denominations; yet not because of what may be sectarian in any of them; for, so far as a Church becomes merely sectarian, it must become narrow, and must tend to stifle if not crucify the Spirit. As I suppose, the forms should be seen in the Church, and not the Church in the forms. In the first case the forms may be instrumentally good, just as the written Scriptures are good, instrumentally; or, as St. Paul said; We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, 1 *Tim.* i: 8. But if the written takes absolute precedence in the affections, the spirit cannot but suffer.

I will say, in conclusion, that I have not written this work with any feeling of unkindness towards any system of religion or towards any class of men. It was originally entered upon for the purpose of seeing the subject with all the clearness possible, in the full determination to "follow" the Spirit of Truth in any direction or to any result, according to my best apprehension of it. I publish the result as suggestions merely; for I know very well that the convictions of

one ought never to be anything more than suggestions for another. I would gladly hope that those who differ from me may not allow that difference to disturb the charity with which all men are bound to regard the opinions of each other, knowing that, in this state, we all see as through a glass darkly.

APPENDIX.

Although the members of the Masonic fraternity must be supposed well instructed in the history of their society, yet I have concluded to append to this work a few extracts, principally from Dr. Mackey's Lexicon of Free Masonry, which can hardly fail to interest the general reader.

ESSENES. A sect among the Jews, supposed by masonic writers to have been the descendants of the Free Masons of the Temple, and through whom the order was propagated to modern times. The real origin of the Essenes has been a subject of much dispute among profane writers; but there is certainly a remarkable coincidence in many of their doctrines and ceremonies with those professed by the Free Masons. They were divided into two classes, *speculatives* and *operatives*; the former devoting themselves to a life of contemplation, and the latter daily engaging in the practice of some handicraft. The proceeds of their labor were, however, deposited in one general stock; for they religiously observed a community of goods. They secluded themselves from the rest of the world, and were completely esoteric in their doctrines, which

were also of a symbolic character. They admitted no women into their order; abolished all distinctions of rank, "meeting on the level," and giving the precedence only to virtue. Charity was bestowed on their indigent brethren, and, as a means of recognition, they adopted signs and other modes similar to those of the Free Masons. Their order was divided into three degrees. When a candidate applied for admission, his character was scrutinized with the greatest severity. He was then presented with a girdle, a hatchet, and a white garment. Being thus admitted to the first degree, he remained in a state of probation for one year; during which time, although he lived according to their customs, he was not admitted to their meetings. At the termination of this period, if found worthy, he was advanced to the second degree, and was made a partaker of the waters of purification. But he was not yet permitted to live among them, but after enduring another probation of two years duration, he was at length admitted to the third degree, and united in full fellowship among them. On this occasion, he took a solemn oath, the principal heads of which, according to Josephus, were as follows: To exercise piety toward God, and justice toward men; to hate the wicked and assist the good; to show fidelity to all men, obedience to those in authority, and kindness to those below him; to be a lover of truth, and a reprover of falsehood; to keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains; to conceal nothing from his own sect, nor to discover any of their doctrines to others; to communicate their doctrines, in no otherwise than he had received them, himself; and lastly to preserve the books belonging to the sect, and the names of the angels in which he shall be instructed. Philo, of Alexandria, who, in two books written expressly on the subject of the Essenes, has given a copious account of their doctrines and manners, says, that when they

were listening to the secret instructions of their chiefs, they stood with "the right hand on the breast a little below the chin, and the left hand placed along the side." A similar position is attributed by Macrobius to Venus, when deploring the death of Adonis, in those rites which were celebrated at Tyre, the birth-place of Hiram the Builder.—*Lexicon*.

The following passage is from Dr. Oliver's Theocratic Philosophy of Free Masonry, page 325, with his own note on the Essenes:—"The Three Degrees of Masonry, as they were probably arranged by the Grand Masters at the building of the Temple, might bear a general reference to the three Orders of the Jewish Priesthood, an arrangement which has also been introduced into the Christian Church. Indeed this number was universally adopted in every ancient system. Even the Spurious Free Masonry had the same number of Steps. The first consisted of probation, purification, and expiation. The second was called the Lesser Mysteries; into which the candidate *passed* by solemn ceremonies; and also to the third, after a long period of additional trial, which was denominated the Greater Mysteries. These consisted of fearful rites, introductory to a full revelation of all the ineffable doctrines, which he was bound under an obligation and heavy penalties never to reveal."*

* The Essenes, who preserved the true Free Masonry from extinction in the dark ages which preceded the advent of Christ, admitted only three degrees, and the probationary term extended to one whole year. If, during this period, the candidate gave satisfactory proofs of his temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice, he was accepted, and received the first Step or Degree; in which noviciate he remained another year before he was passed to the Second Step; and it was not until the expiration of three years that he was admitted to a full participation in the secrets and benefits of the society. And even here the utmost precaution was used. The candidate was previously bound by the most solemn

Dr. OLIVER, speaking of the Spurious Free Masonry, the name he gives to all of the ancient Mysteries, (Eleusinian and others,) says :—"Meanwhile the true light of Masonry declined in public estimation as the rapid progress of its earth-born adversary made all nations and people and languages bend before it, until it gave portentous intimation of approaching decay ; and nought could have saved it from extinction, had it not been re-invigorated by the Essenes, a well-intentioned sect of people amongst the Jews, who took charge of the forsaken institution, cherished it in their bosom, until its rays of light once more began to illuminate the surrounding darkness ; and it thence continued to enlighten a narrow and restricted path, terminating, however, in the broad and glorious blaze of splendour that dissipated the unholy shades of idolatry, in the person of Jesus Christ.

"ANTIQUITY OF MASONRY. Free Masonry is in its principles undoubtedly coeval with the creation, but in its organization as a peculiar institution, such as it now exists, we dare not trace it further back than to the building of King Solomon's temple. It was, however, in its origin closely connected with the Ancient Mysteries, and the curious inquirer will find some gratification in tracing this connection.

"When man was first created, he had, of course, a perfect knowledge of the true name and nature of the being who created him. But when, by his own folly, he fell "from

vows to keep inviolably secret the mysteries of his Order, and to act upon and abide by the ancient usages and established customs of the Fraternity. The Brethren distinguished each other in darkness and in light by signs and tokens. The most profound silence was imposed at their assemblies ; the Lecturer expounding the tenets of their creed, which were enfolded in a series of allegorical symbols, the rest listening with a grave and solemn attention.

his high estate," he lost, with his purity, that knowledge of God which in his primeval condition formed the noblest endowment of his mind. * * * * *

"The philosophers and sages, however, still retained, or discovered by the dim light of nature, some traces of these great doctrines of masonry, the unity of God, and the immortality of the soul. But these doctrines they dared not teach in public, for history records what would have been the fate of such temerity, when it informs us that Socrates paid the forfeit of his life for his boldness in proclaiming these truths to the Athenian youth.

"They therefore taught in secret what they were afraid to inculcate in public, and established for this purpose the Ancient Mysteries, those truly masonic institutions, which, by a series of solemn and imposing ceremonies, prepared the mind of the initiate for the reception of those unpopular dogmas, while, by the caution exercised in the selection of candidates, and the obligations of secrecy imposed upon them, the teachers were secured from all danger of popular bigotry and fanaticism. A full description of these Mysteries will be found in this work under the appropriate title. Their members went through a secret ceremony of initiation, by which they became entitled to a full participation in the esoteric knowledge of the order, and were in possession of certain modes of recognition known only to themselves. In all of them, there was, in addition to the instructions in relation to the existence of a Supreme Deity, a legend in which, by the dramatic representation of the violent death and subsequent restoration to life of some distinguished personage, the doctrines of the resurrection and the soul's immortality were emblematically illustrated.

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"The fraternity of Dionysian Architects were linked to-

gether by the secret ties of the Dionysian Mysteries, into which they had all been initiated. Thus constituted, the fraternity was distinguished by many peculiarities that strikingly assimilate it to our order. In the exercise of charity, the 'more opulent were sacredly bound to provide for the exigencies of the poorer brethren.' For the facilities of labor and government, they were divided into lodges, each of which was governed by a Master and Wardens. They employed in their ceremonial observances many of the implements which are still to be found among Free Masons, and used like them, a universal language, by which one brother could distinguish another in the dark as well as in the light, and which served to unite the members scattered over India, Persia, and Syria, into one common brotherhood. The existence of this order in Tyre, at the time of the building of the Temple, is universally admitted; and Hiram, the widow's son, to whom Solomon intrusted the superintendence of the workmen, as an inhabitant of Tyre, and as a skillful architect and cunning and curious workman, was doubtless one of its members. Hence we are scarcely claiming too much for our order, when we suppose that the Dionysians were sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to assist King Solomon in the construction of the house he was about to dedicate to Jehovah, and that they communicated to their Jewish fellow-laborers a knowledge of the advantages of their fraternity, and invited them to a participation in its mysteries and privileges. In this union, however, the apocryphal legend of the Dionysians gave way to the true legend of the Masons, which was unhappily furnished by a melancholy incident that occurred at the time.

"Upon the completion of the Temple, the workmen who had been engaged in its construction necessarily dispersed, to extend their knowledge and to renew their labors in other lands. But we do not lose sight of the order. We find it

still existing in Judea, under the name of the **ESSENIAN FRATERNITY**. This was rather a society of philosophers than of architects, and in this respect it approached still nearer to the character of modern speculative masonry. The Essenians were, however, undoubtedly connected with the Temple, as their origin is derived by the learned Scaliger, with every appearance of truth, from the **KASSIDEANS**, a fraternity of Jewish devotees, who, in the language of Lawrie, had associated together as 'Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem, to adorn the porches of that magnificent structure, and to preserve it from injury and decay.' The Essenians were peculiarly strict in scrutinizing the characters of all those who applied for admission into their fraternity. The successful candidate, at the termination of his probationary novitiate, was presented by the Elders of the society with a white garment, as an emblem of the purity of life to which he was to aspire, and which, like the unsullied apron, the first gift that we bestow upon an Entered Apprentice, was esteemed more honorable than aught that any earthly prince could give. An oath was administered to him, by which he bound himself not to divulge the secrets with which he should be intrusted, and not to make any innovations upon the settled usages of the society. He was then made acquainted with certain modes of recognition, and was instructed in the traditional knowledge of the order. They admitted no women into their fraternity; abolished all distinctions of rank; and devoted themselves to the acquisition of knowledge and the dispensation of charity.

"From the Essenians, Pythagoras derived much, if not all of the knowledge and the ceremonies with which he clothed the esoteric school of his philosophy; and while this identity of doctrines and ceremonies is universally admitted by profane historians, many of the most competent of our own writers

have attributed the propagation of masonry into Europe to the efforts of the Grecian sage. * * * * *

“Free Masons continued for a long time to receive the protection and enjoy the patronage of the church and the nobility, until the former, becoming alarmed at the increase of their numbers and the extension of their privileges, began to persecute them with an unrelenting rigor, which eventually led to their suspension on the continent.”—*Lexicon*.

“ADONIS, MYSTERIES OF. The mysteries which, in Egypt, the cradle of all the Pagan rites, had been consecrated to Osiris, in passing over into Phenicia were dedicated to Adonis. According to the legend, Venus, having beheld Adonis when a child, became so enamored of him, that she seized him, and concealing him from sight, exhibited him to Proserpine alone. But she, becoming equally enamored of his beauty, sought to obtain possession of him. The dispute between the goddesses was reconciled by Jupiter, who decided that Adonis should dwell six months of the year with Venus, and the remaining six months with Proserpine. This decree was executed; but Adonis, who was a great hunter, was afterwards killed on Mount Libanus by a wild boar, who thrust his tusk into his groin. Venus, inconsolable for his death, inundated his body with her tears, until Proserpine, in pity, restored him to life. Macrobius explains the allegory thus: ‘Philosophers have given the name of Venus to the superior hemisphere of which we occupy a part, and that of Proserpine to the inferior. Hence Venus, among the Assyrians and Phenicians, is in tears, when the Sun, in his annual course through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, passes over to our antipodes. For of these twelve signs, six are said to be superior, and six inferior. When the Sun is in the inferior signs, and the days are consequently short, the goddess is supposed

to weep the temporary death and privation of the Sun, detained by Proserpine, whom we regard as the divinity of the southern or antipodal regions. And Adonis is said to be restored to Venus, when the Sun, having traversed the six inferior signs, enters those of our hemisphere, bringing with it an increase of light and lengthened days. The boar which is supposed to have killed Adonis is an emblem of winter; for this animal, covered with rough bristles, delights in cold, wet, and miry situations, and his favorite food is the acorn, a fruit peculiar to winter. The Sun is said, too, to be wounded by the winter, since, at that season, we lose its light and heat; effects which death produces upon animated beings. Venus is represented on Mount Libanus in an attitude of grief; her head, bent and covered with a veil, is sustained by her left hand near her breast, and her countenance is bathed with tears. This figure represents the earth in winter, when, veiled in clouds, and deprived of the Sun, its powers have become torpid. The fountains, like the eyes of Venus, are overflowing, and the fields, deprived of their floral ornaments, present a joyless appearance. But when the Sun, emerging from the southern regions of the earth, passes the vernal equinox, Venus is once more rejoiced, the fields are again embellished with flowers, the grass springs up in the meadows, and the trees recover their foliage.

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"The mysteries of Adonis were, at one time, introduced into Judea, where the Hebrew women were accustomed to hold an annual lamentation for him, under the name of Tammuz, of which Ezekiel speaks, viii. 14: 'Behold there sat women weeping for Tammuz.' According to Calmet and Faber, Adonis was also identical with Baal-peor, the idol of the Moabites, mentioned in the twenty-fifth chapter of Numbers.

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"Julius Firmicius, a Christian writer of the fourth century, thus describes a portion of the Adonisian ceremonies :

"'On a certain night an image is laid out upon a bed, and bewailed in mournful strains. At length, when they are satiated with their fictitious lamentation, light is introduced, and the priest, having first anointed the mouths of all those who had been weeping, whispers with a gentle murmur : *Trust ye, initiates, for the god being saved, out of pains salvation shall arise to us.*'

"Hence the ceremonies were a representation of the death and resurrection of Adonis in the person of the aspirant."—*Lexicon.*

"DRUIDS. * * * The druidical ceremonies of initiation, according to Oliver, 'bore an undoubted reference to the salvation of Noah and his seven companions in the ark.' Indeed, all the ancient mysteries appear to have been arkite in their general character. Their places of initiation were of various forms ; circular, because a circle was an emblem of the universe ; or oval, in allusion to the mundane egg, from which, according to the Egyptians, our first parents issued ; or serpentine, because a serpent was the symbol of Hu, the druidical Noah, or winged, to represent the motion of the Divine Spirit ; or cruciform, because a cross was the emblem of regeneration. Their only covering was the *clouded canopy*, because they deemed it absurd to confine the Omnipotent beneath a roof, and they were constructed of embankments of earth, and of unhewn stones, *unpolluted with a metal tool*. No one was permitted to enter their sacred retreats, unless *he bore a chain*. The chief priest or hierophant, was called the Archdruid. Their grand periods of initiation were quarterly, taking place on the days when the sun reached his equinoctial and solstitial points, which at that remote

period were the 13th of February, the 1st of May, the 19th of August, and the 1st of November. The principal of these was the 1st of May, (which, according to Mr. Higgins, was the festival of the Sun entering into Taurus,) and the May-day celebration which still exists among us, is a remnant of the druidical rites. It was not lawful to commit their ceremonies or doctrines to writing, as we learn from Cæsar, and hence the ancient Greek and Roman writers have been enabled to give us but little information on this subject.

“ The institution was divided into three degrees or classes, the lowest being the *Bards* ; the second the *Faides*, or *Vates*, and the highest the Druids. Much mental preparation and physical purification were used previously to admission into the first degree. The aspirant was clothed with the three sacred colors, white, blue, and green ; white as the symbol of Light, blue of Truth, and green of Hope. When the rites of initiation were passed, the tri-colored robe was changed for one of green ; in the the second degree, the candidate was clothed in blue, and having surmounted all the dangers of the third, and arrived at the summit of perfection, he received the red tiara and flowing mantle of purest white. The ceremonies were numerous, the physical proofs painful, and the mental trials appalling. They commenced in the first degree, with placing the aspirant in the pastos, bed, or coffin, where his symbolical death was represented, and they terminated in the the third, by his regeneration or restoration to life from the womb of the giantess Ceridwin, and the committal of the body of the *newly born* to the waves in a small boat, symbolical of the ark. The result was, generally, that he succeeded in reaching the safe landing-place that represented Mount Ararat, but if his arm was weak, or his heart failed, death was the almost inevitable consequence. If he refused the trial, through timidity, he was contemptuously rejected, and declared

forever ineligible to participate in the sacred rites. But if he undertook it and succeeded, he was joyously invested with all the privileges of druidism.

"The doctrines of the Druids were the same as those entertained by Pythagoras. They taught the existence of one Supreme Being; a future state of rewards and punishments; the immortality of the soul, and a metempsychosis; and the object of their mystic rites was to communicate the doctrines in symbolic language."—*Lexicon*.

"EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES. Egypt was the cradle of all the mysteries of Paganism. At one time in possession of all the learning and religion that was to be found in the world, it extended into other nations the influence of its sacred rites and its secret doctrines. The importance, therefore, of the Egyptian mysteries, will entitle them to a more diffusive explanation than has been awarded to the examination of the other rites of spurious Free Masonry.

"The priesthood of Egypt constituted a sacred caste, in whom the sacerdotal functions were hereditary. They exercised also an important part in the government of the state, and the kings of Egypt were but the first subjects of its priests. They had originally organized, and continued to control the ceremonies of initiation. Their doctrines were of two kinds, exoteric or public, which were communicated to the multitude, and esoteric or secret, which were revealed only to a chosen few; and to obtain them, it was necessary to pass through an initiation, which, as we shall see, was characterized by the severest trials of courage and fortitude.

"The secret doctrines of the Egyptian rites related to the gods, the creation and government of the world, and the nature and condition of the human soul. In their initiations, says Oliver, they informed the candidate that the mysteries

were received from Adam, Seth, and Enoch, and they called the perfectly initiated candidate *Al-om-jah*, from the name of the Deity. Secresy was principally inculcated, and all their lessons were taught by symbols. Many of these have been preserved. With them, *a point within a circle*, was the symbol of the Deity surrounded by eternity; the *globe* was a symbol of the supreme and eternal God; a serpent with a tail in his mouth, was emblematic of eternity; a child sitting on the lotos was a symbol of the sun; a palm tree, of victory; a staff, of authority; an ant, of knowledge; a goat, of fecundity; a wolf, of aversion; the right hand with the fingers open, of plenty; and the left hand closed, of protection.”—*Lexicon*.

“ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES. * * * The qualifications for initiation were maturity of age, and purity of conduct. A character, free from suspicion of immorality, was absolutely required in the aspirant. Nero, on this account, did not dare, when in Greece, to offer himself as a candidate for initiation. The privilege was at first confined to natives of Greece, but it was afterwards extended to foreigners. Significant symbols were used as means of instruction, and words of recognition were communicated to the initiated. In these regulations, as well as in the gradual advancement of the candidate from one degree to another, that resemblance to our own institution is readily perceived, which has given to these, as well as to the other ancient mysteries, the appropriate name of Spurious Free Masonry. The following passage of an ancient author, preserved by Stobæus, and quoted by Warburton in the 2d Book of his Divine Legation, is too interesting to Free Masons to be omitted:

“The mind is affected and agitated in death just as it is in initiation into the grand mysteries; and word answers to word, as well as thing to thing; for *τελευτᾶν* is to die; and

τελεισθαι, to be initiated. The first stage is nothing, but errors and uncertainties; laborious wanderings; a rude and fearful march through night and darkness. And now arrived on the verge of death and initiation, every thing wears a dreadful aspect; it is all horror, trembling, sweating, and affrightment. But this scene once over, a miraculous and divine *light* displays itself, and shining plains and flowery meadows open on all hands before them. Here they are entertained with hymns and dances; with the sublime doctrines of faithful knowledge, and with reverend and holy visions. And now become perfect and initiated, they are FREE, and no longer under restraint; but crowned and triumphant, they walk up and down the regions of the blessed; converse with pure and holy men, and celebrate the sacred mysteries at pleasure.”—*Lexicon*.

In Dr. OLIVER’s account of the Mysteries of Bacchus, we read:—“The first actual ceremony among the Greeks was to purify the aspirant with water, and to crown him with myrtle, because the myrtle tree was sacred to Proserpine; after which he was free from arrest during the celebrations. He was then introduced into a small cave or vestibule to be invested with the sacred habiliments; after which his conductor delivered him over to the mystagogue, who then commenced the initiation with the prescribed formula, *Εχας, Εχας, εστε βεβηλοι*, Depart hence, all ye profane; and the guide addressed the aspirant by exhorting him to call forth all his courage and fortitude, as the process on which he was now about to enter was of the most appalling nature. And being led forward through a series of dark passages and dismal caverns, to represent the erratic state of the Ark while floating on the troubled surface of the diluvian waters, the machinery opens upon him. He first hears the distant thunder pealing through the vault of

heaven, accompanied by the howling of dogs and wild beasts — an apt representation of the confusion which prevailed amongst the multiplicity of domestic and ferocious animals during the period of Noah's confinement in the Ark. These terrific noises rapidly approach, and the din becomes tremendous, reverberated, as it doubtless was, in endless repetitions, from the echoing vaults and lofty caverns within whose inextricable mazes he was now immured. Flashes of vivid light now broke in upon him, and rendered the prevailing darkness more visible; and by the momentary illumination he beheld the appearances by which he was surrounded. Monstrous shapes and apparitions, demoniacal figures, grinning defiance at the intruder; mystical visions and flitting shadows, unreal phantoms of a dog-like form, overwhelm him with terror." In this state of horrible apprehension and darkness, he was kept *three days and nights*.* (In *italics* in the original.)

"With passions thus excited, the aspirant was now made to perform the *aphanism*, or ceremonies commemorative of the mystical death of Bacchus. He was covered with the pastos or bed; or in other words he was subjected to confinement in a close cell, that he might reflect seriously, in solitude and darkness, on the business he was engaged in; and be reduced to a proper state of mind for the reception of sublime and mysterious truths. This was the symbolical death of the mysteries; and the deliverance from confinement was the act

* Fab. Pag. Idol., vol. viii., p. 156. This ceremony had a particular and intimate connection with the Egyptian plague of *darkness*, says Faber. "The scriptural account of it is very brief, yet it sets forth one circumstance of high importance. There was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt *three days*; they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for *three days*. It appears, then, that the duration of the preternatural darkness was precisely equal to that of the darkness of the Mysteries. (Fab. ut supra.)

of regeneration or new-birth; and hence the renovated aspirant was termed *διφύης* or twice born; once from the womb of his natural mother, and again from the pastos of initiation."

"HOURS OF WORK. * * * The reason given by the ancients for this selection of night as the time for initiation, is equally applicable to the system of Free Masonry. 'Darkness,' says Oliver, 'was an emblem of death, and death was a prelude to resurrection. It will be at once seen, therefore, in what manner the doctrine of the resurrection was inculcated and exemplified in these remarkable institutions.'

"Death and the resurrection were the doctrines taught in the ancient mysteries; and night and darkness were necessary to add to the sacred awe and reverence which these doctrines ought always to inspire in the rational and contemplative mind. The same doctrines form the very groundwork of Free Masonry, and as the Master Mason, to use the language of Hutchinson, 'represents a man saved from the grave of iniquity and raised to the faith of salvation,' darkness and night are the appropriate accompaniments to the solemn ceremonies which demonstrate this profession."—*Lexicon*.

"MYSTERIES. * * * The most important of these mysteries were those of Mithras, celebrated in Persia; of Osiris and Isis, celebrated in Egypt; of Eleusis, instituted in Greece; and the Scandinavian and Druidical rites, which were confined to the Gothic and Celtic tribes. In all these various mysteries, we find a singular unity of design, clearly indicating a common origin, and a purity of doctrine as evidently proving that this common origin was not to be sought for in the popular theology of the Pagan world. The ceremonies of initiation were all funereal in their character. They

celebrated the death and the resurrection of some cherished being, either the object of esteem as a hero, or of devotion as a god. Subordination of degrees was instituted, and the candidate was subjected to probations varying in their character and severity; the rites were practised in the darkness of night, and often amid the gloom of impenetrable forests or subterranean caverns; and the full fruition of knowledge, for which so much labor was endured, and so much danger incurred, was not attained until the aspirant, well tried and thoroughly purified, had reached the place of wisdom and of light.

“These mysteries undoubtedly owed their origin to the desire on the part of the priests of establishing an esoteric philosophy, in which should be taught the sublime truths which they had derived, (though they themselves at length forgot the source,) from the instruction of God himself through the ancient patriarchs. By this confinement of these doctrines to a system of secret knowledge, guarded by the most rigid rites, could they only expect to preserve them from the superstitions, innovations, and corruptions of the world as it then existed. ‘The distinguished few,’ says Oliver, ‘who retained their fidelity, uncontaminated by the contagion of evil example, would soon be able to estimate the superior benefits of an isolated institution, which afforded the advantage of a select society, and kept at an unapproachable distance the profane scoffer, whose presence might pollute their pure devotions and social converse, by contumelious language or unholy mirth.’ And doubtless the prevention of this intrusion, and the preservation of these sublime truths, was the original object of the institution of the ceremonies of initiation, and the adoption of other means by which the initiated could be recognised, and the uninitiated excluded. Such was the opinion of Warburton, who says that ‘the mysteries were at

first the retreats of sense and virtue, till time corrupted them in most of the gods.'

* * * "The Magi, Brahmins, Gymnosophists, Druids and priests of Egypt lived thus in sequestered habitations and subterranean caves, and obtained great reputation by their discoveries in astronomy, chemistry and mechanics, by their purity of morals, and by their knowledge of the science of legislation. It was in these schools, says M. Robin, that the first sages and legislators of antiquity were formed, and in them he supposes the doctrines taught to have been the unity of God and the immortality of the soul; and it was from these mysteries, and their symbols and hieroglyphics, that the exuberant fancy of the Greeks drew much of their mythology.

"The candidates for initiation were not only expected to be of a clear and unblemished character, and free from crime, but their future conduct was required to be characterized by the same purity and innocence. They were, therefore, obliged, by solemn engagements, to commence a new life of piety and virtue, upon which they entered by a severe course of penance.

"The mysteries were held in the highest respect, by both the government and the people. It was believed that he who was initiated would not only enjoy an increased share of virtue and happiness in this world, but would be entitled to celestial honors in the next. 'Thrice happy they,' says Sophocles, 'who descended to the shades below after having beheld these rites; for they alone have life in Hades, while all others suffer there every kind of evil.' And Isocrates declares that 'those who have been initiated in the mysteries, entertain better hopes, both as to the end of life and the whole of futurity.'

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"On the subject of their relation to the rites of Free Masonry, to which they bear in many respects so remarkable a resemblance, that some connection seems necessarily implied, there are two principal theories. The one, is that embraced and taught by Dr. Oliver, namely, that they are but deviations from that common source, both of them and of Free Masonry, the patriarchal mode of worship established by God himself. With this pure system of truth, he supposes the science of Free Masonry to have been coeval and identified. But the truths thus revealed by divinity, came at length to be doubted or rejected through the imperfection of human reason, and though the visible symbols were retained in the mysteries of the Pagan world, their true interpretation was lost.

"That the instruction communicated in the mysteries of Paganism were an impure derivation from the sublime truths of the patriarchal theology, I have no hesitaton in believing. But that they were an emanation from Free Masonry, as we now understand the terms, I am not yet prepared to admit, notwithstanding the deep veneration in which I hold the learning of Dr. Oliver. I prefer, therefore, the second theory, which, leaving the origin of the mysteries to be sought in the patriarchal doctrines, where Oliver has placed it, finds the connection between them and Free Masonry commencing at the building of King Solomon's Temple. Over the construction of this building, Hiram, the Architect of Tyre, presided. At Tyre the mysteries of Bacchus had been introduced by the Dionysian Artificers, and into their fraternity Hiram, in all probability, had, as I have already suggested, been admitted. Free Masonry, whose tenets had always existed in purity among the immediate descendants of the patriarchs, added now to its doctrines the guard of secrecy, which, as

Dr. Oliver himself remarks, was necessary to preserve them from perversion or pollution.

"This, then, it seems to me is the true connection between the mysteries and speculative Free Masonry. They both emanated from one common source, but the former soon losing much of their original purity, were compelled, in order to preserve the little that was left, to have recourse to the invention of ceremonies and modes of recognition, and a secret doctrine, by means of which all but a select and worthy few were excluded. These ceremonies, and especially this symbolic or secret mode of communicating instruction, so admirable in themselves, were afterwards adopted by the Free Masons, who had retained the ancient tenets in their original purity, but they divested them of their heathenish allusions, and adapted them to the divine system which they had preserved unimpaired.

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"Faber, who sought an Arkite origin for every thing, says that 'the initiations into the mysteries scientifically represented the mythic descent into Hades, and the return from thence to the light of day, by which was meant the entrance into the ark and the subsequent liberation from its dark enclosure. They all equally related to the allegorical disappearance, or death, or descent of the great father, at their commencement; and to his invention, or revival, or return from Hades, at their conclusion.'—*Lexicon*.

In Dr. OLIVER'S account of the Mysteries in Britain, we read:—"The aspirant for mere initiation, was clad in a robe striped alternately with *white*, *skyblue* and *green*, which were the sacred colors of Druidism, and emblematical of *light*, *truth*, and *hope*; and confined in a cromlech without food three days prior to his admission into each of the two first

degrees; that is, he was placed in the pastos with the usual ceremonies on the evening of the first day, remained an entire day enclosed, or *dead* in the language of the mysteries, and was liberated for initiation, or in other words, restored to life on the third day."—*Lexicon*.

"NOACHIDÆ, or NOACHITES. The descendants of Noah. A term applied to Free Masons. Noah having alone preserved the true name and worship of God, amid a race of impious idolaters, Free Masons claim to be his descendants, because they still preserve that pure religion which distinguished this second father of the human race from the rest of the world. And even when his descendants began again, in the plains of Shinar, to forget the Almighty, and to wander from the path of purity, the principles of Noah were still perpetuated by that portion of his race whom the Free Masons of the present day regard as their early predecessors. Hence, Free Masons call themselves Noachidæ, or the sons of Noah.

"This respect for Noah, as the father and founder of the masonic system of theology, was not confined to the pure Free Masons, but extended, even unconsciously, to the seceders from its spirit, those whom Oliver calls the spurious Free Masons of antiquity. In all their mysteries, they commemorated, even after they had lost the true history, the descent of Noah into the ark, and his subsequent exodus. The entrance into initiation was symbolic of his entrance into the vessel of his salvation; his detention in the ark was represented by the darkness and the pastos, coffin, or couch in which the aspirant was placed, and the exit of Noah, after the forty days of deluge, was seen in the manifestation of the candidate, when, being fully tried and proved, he was admitted to full light, amid the rejoicings of the surrounding initiates, who received him in the sacellum or holy place."—*Lexicon*.

"ORPHIC MYSTERIES. These Grecian rites were only a modification of the mysteries of Bacchus or Dionysus, and were thus called, because it was said that Orpheus first introduced the worship of Bacchus into Greece from Egypt. They differed, however, from the other pagan rites, in not being confined to the priesthood, but in being practised by a fraternity who did not possess the sacerdotal functions. The initiated commemorated in their ceremonies, which were performed at night, the murder of Bacchus by the Titans, and his final restoration to the supreme government of the universe, under the name of Phanes.

* * * * *

"In the day, the initiates were crowned with fennel and poplar, and carried serpents in their hands, or twined them around their heads, crying with a loud voice, *enos, sabos*, and danced to the sound of the mystic words, *hyes, attes, attes, hyes*. At night the mystes were bathed in the lustral water, and having been rubbed over with clay and bran, he was clothed in the skin of a fawn, and having risen from the bath, he exclaimed, 'I have departed from evil and have found the good.'"—*Lexicon*.

"SUPPORTS OF THE LODGE. The institution of masonry, venerable for its antiquity, and its virtuous character, is said to be supported by *Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty*; for the wisdom of its eminent founders was engaged in its first design; the strength of its organization has enabled it to survive the fall of empires, and the changes of languages, religions, and manners which have taken place since its formation; and the beauty of holiness is exhibited in the purity and virtue that it inculcates, and in the morality of life which it demands of all its children.

"Our lodges, thus supported, will find in these columns

another analogy to their great prototype, the Temple of Jerusalem. For that mighty fabric was designed by the *wisdom* of Solomon, King of Israel, who found *strength* to carry on the great undertaking in the assistance and friendship of Hiram, King of Tyre; and *beauty* to adorn the structure in the architectural skill and taste of Hiram, the widow's son."—*Lexicon*.

"COFFIN. In the ancient mysteries, the aspirant could not claim a participation in the highest secrets until he had been placed in the Pastos, Bed or Coffin. The placing him in the coffin was called the symbolical death of the mysteries, and his deliverance was termed a raising from the dead, Hence arose a peculiarity in the Greek verb *teleutao*, which, in the active voice, signified 'I die,' and in the middle voice, 'I am initiated.'"—*Lexicon*.

"PASTOS. (Greek *παστος*, a couch.) The pastos was a chest or close cell, in the pagan mysteries, (among the Druids, an excavated stone,) in which the aspirant was for some time placed, to commemorate the mystical death of the god. This constituted the symbolical death, which was common to all the mysteries. In the Arkite rites, the pastos represented the ark in which Noah was confined. We may refer it to the coffin among masonic emblems."—*Lexicon*.

In Dr. OLIVER'S Signs and Symbols, as elsewhere in his writings, are many allusions to the ARK. Here is one out of many:—

"The consequences of an open renunciation of the Deity, which was the probable cause of the general Deluge, were however concealed by the crafty founders of idolatry, under the same veil which obscured the Great First Cause; and

everything relating to that event, though transmitted with unequivocal exactness, was studiously enveloped in a web of mystery, calculated to lead the inquirer astray.

Hence the jargon about Deucalion, the Atlantians, Typhon and Oairis, the Argonauts, and all the various fables with which different nations have been equally amused and misled. The truth was concealed with great art, under imposing ceremonies and fearful denunciations. Solemn oaths were administered to restrain the inquiry within certain prescribed limits; and the dictatorial hierophant, invested with uncontrollable authority, could draw the line with his magic wand, and say, even to the initiated, 'This is the boundary of your knowledge; thus far shall ye come, and no farther.'

"And this accounts for the comparative ignorance of the adept himself; for the ineffable secrets were intrusted to none but kings and priests; and were conveyed, almost solely, by oral communication. Thus an extraordinary ceremony, referring to the Deluge, was used in the initiations, which shows how mysteriously that event was preserved and transmitted. The violent death of some unhappy individual was here celebrated, whose body they affected to have lost; and much time was expended and many ceremonies used in the search; even the aspirant himself was made figuratively to die and to descend into the infernal regions, for the purpose of ascertaining the fate of him whose disappearance they ceased not to deplore. This part of the ceremony was performed in *darkness*; and was accompanied with loud and ceaseless wailings and lamentations. The body at length being found, the aspirant was passed through the regenerating medium, and thus was said to be raised from the dead and born again. This was the commencement of joy and gladness; and the initiated was invested with his symbols amidst universal rejoicing and acclamation.

“Such is the pattern on which all the mysteries were formed ; and it may be needless to repeat that the ceremony bears an evident reference, amongst other remarkable occurrences, to the descent of Noah into the darkness of the Ark, which was his emblematical Coffin, where he was figuratively said to have been in a state resembling death ; and his egress thence considered as a new birth, and a restoration to the blessings of life and liberty.”

“RESURRECTION. A resurrection from the grave and a future immortality were the great lessons which it was the design of the ancient mysteries to inculcate. In like manner by a symbolic ceremony of great impressiveness, the same sublime truths are made to constitute the end and object of Free Masonry in the third degree, or as it has been called by Hutchinson, “the Master’s Order.”—*Lexicon*.

“TRADITIONS. The legends or traditions of Free Masonry constitute a very considerable and important part of its ritual. In many instances these traditions have been corrupted by anachronisms and other errors, which have naturally crept into them during a long series of oral transmission. No one, therefore, can for a moment contend that all the legends and traditions of the order are, to the very letter, historical facts. All that can be claimed for them is, that in some there is a great deal of truthful narrative, more or less overlaid with fiction ; in others, simply a mere substratum of history ; and in others, nothing more than an idea, to which the legend or myth is indebted for its existence, and of which it is, as a symbol, the exponent.

The intelligent Mason will always, however, be able, after a little consideration, to separate the substratum of truth from the superstructure of fiction which has been imposed upon it.

And then, what is presented as a tradition will often be found to be a mere myth or allegory, whose symbolic teaching is of great beauty and importance. It is a part of the science of Free Masonry to elaborate out of these traditions the truth, symbolic or historical, which they are intended to convey, and to distinguish a tradition founded in fact from one which is based upon a myth, so as to assign to the annals and the poetry of the order their respective portions."—*Lexicon*.

"LEGEND. A legend may properly be defined a traditional tale. All countries and all religions have their legends. In the ancient mysteries there was always a legend on which much symbolical instruction was based. These legends of the mysteries, although they varied as to the subject of the history in each, yet all agree in this, that they were funereal in their character—that they commemorated the death by violence, and the subsequent resurrection, of some favorite hero or hero-god—and that beginning with lamentation they ended in joy.

"'In like manner Free Masonry has its legends and allegorical references, many of them founded in fact, and capable of unquestionable proof, while others are based on Jewish traditions, and only invested with probability, while they equally inculcate and enforce the most solemn and important truths.' Of these legends, the one which may, by way of excellence, be called "*The Legend*," and which more particularly is connected with the Master's Degree, it may be supposed was substituted by our ancient brethren, when they united themselves at the Temple with the Dionysians, for the pagan and apocryphal legend of Bacchus, celebrated by that society."—*Lexicon*.

"LODGE ROOM. * * The proper images or emblems [of a Lodge] are to be taken from the Bible, which alone contains the authentic records of ancient masonry."—*Lexicon*.

"*Symbolic Signification of the Lodge.*—Symbolically a Mason's Lodge is a representation of the world. Its clouded canopy is an emblem of those mansions of unutterable bliss, where the Grand Master of the Universe forever reigns, whose all-seeing eye beholds, with unceasing complacency, the efforts of his creatures to do his will. To that abode of the blessed the Mason is taught to aspire, while the path is indicated by the theological ladder, whose principal rounds are faith, hope, and charity. The Sun, the eternal fountain of light, the unwearied ruler of the day, shines in the lodge, a bright exponent of his Creator's power, while the Moon, the glorious orb of night, repeats the lesson of divine munificence. Here, too, are we taught, that the vast universe over which this Omnipotence presides, was no work of chance, but that its foundations are laid in wisdom, supported by strength, and adorned with beauty. And as the presence of the Almighty illuminates with refulgent splendour the most distant recesses of the universe, so is the lodge enlightened by the presence of his revealed will. And hence the Bible, as it is of all lights the most pure, is to the Mason the most indispensable. And, finally, as this world, vast in its extent and complicated in its motions, is governed and regulated with unceasing concord and harmony, so is a lodge controlled and directed by the same spirits of peace, which, emanating in brotherly love, relief, and truth, find their full fruition in universal charity."—*Lexicon*.

"EXTENT OF THE LODGE. Boundless is the extent of a Mason's Lodge—in height to the topmost heaven; in depth to the central abyss; in length from east to west; in breadth from north to south."—*Lexicon*.

"TRUTH. Truth is one of the three principal tenets of our order, Brotherly Love and Relief being the other two. To be "true and trusty" is one of the first lessons in which the aspirant is instructed. All other things are mortal and transitory, but truth alone is immutable and eternal; it is the attribute of Him in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of changing."—*Lexicon*.

"NAME OF GOD. In addition to what has been said upon this subject in the article *Jehovah*, we may observe, that an allusion to the unutterable name of God, is to be found in the doctrines and ceremonies of other nations, as well as the Jews. It is said to have been used as the pass-word in the Egyptian mysteries. In the rites of Hindostan, it was bestowed upon the aspirant, under the trilateral form AUM, at the completion of his initiation, and then only by whispering it in his ear. The Cabalists reckoned seventy-two names of God, the knowledge of which imparted to the possessor magical powers. The Druids invoked the omnipotent and all-preserving power, under the symbol I. O. W. * * * * *

"In fact, the name of God must be taken in Free Masonry as symbolical of truth, and then the search for it will be nothing else but the search after truth, the true end and aim of the masonic science. The subordinate names are the subordinate modifications of truth, but the ineffable tetragrammaton will be the sublimity and perfection of Divine Truth, to which all good Masons and all good men are seeking to approach, whether it be by the aid of the theological ladder,

or passing through the pillars of Strength and Establishment, or wandering in the mazes of darkness, beset on all sides by dangers, or traveling weary and worn over rough and rugged roads, whatever be the direction of our journey or how accomplished, light and truth, the Urim and Thummin, are the ultimate objects of our search as Free Masons."—*Lexicon*.

"SPURIOUS FREE MASONRY. Dr. Oliver, one of the most learned and philosophic Masons of this or perhaps any other time, contends that 'the science which we now denominate Speculative Masonry was coeval, at least, with the creation of our globe, and that the far-famed mysteries of idolatry were a subsequent institution, founded on similar principles, with the design of conveying unity and permanence to the false worship, which it otherwise could never have acquired.' This schism from the pure and original source has been designated by the name of the Spurious Free Masonry of Paganism, to distinguish it from the purer system, which this theory supposes to have descended in a direct and uninterrupted line to the Free Masons of the present day.

"In a later work, Dr. Oliver still further explains his idea of the Spurious Free Masonry. The legends and truths which were transmitted pure through the race of Seth, were altered and corrupted by that of Cain, and much confusion arose in consequence of the frequent intercommunications of these two races before the Deluge, though the truth would still be understood by the faithful. Of these was Noah, who out of all these deviations of the antediluvians, was enabled to distinguish truth from falsehood, and to transmit the former in a direct line, according to Rosenberg, through Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kelhoth, Amram, Moses, Joshua, the Elders, the Prophets and the wise men to Solomon. Hence

Free Masons are sometimes called Noachidæ, the descendants and disciples of Noah."

"There was, in after times, a communication between one branch of this Spurious Free Masonry and the true system. This took place at the Temple of Solomon, between the Jewish Masons and the Dionysian Artificers, when true Free Masonry borrowed its present organization from the greater practical wisdom of the Dionysian, without, however, surrendering any of its truth. And the bond of this union between the two bodies which had so long divided the world, was Hiram Abif, who was himself a member of both systems—of the true system by birth, as the son of Jewish parents—and of the spurious by profession and residence, as an artificer of Tyre."—*Lexicon.*

Dr. OLIVER makes a remarkable citation from Faber, in a note at the close of his History of Initiations, to wit:—"I subjoin, without comment, the following observations of the learned and intelligent Faber, on the *machinery* of the Apocalypse, which he thinks was borrowed from that of the Mysteries. In this book 'we find the pure Church described as a woman clothed with the sun, and standing upon the crescent of the moon; while a corrupted Church is exhibited to us, both under the image of a female floating upon the surface of many waters, and under that of a harlot using a monstrous beast as her vehicle. The former of these women, when about to bring forth her first-born, is attacked by a monstrous serpent, which spouts out, against her offspring, a deluge of water; but the earth opens its mouth, and receives the mighty inundation into the central abyss. The latter of them, under the mystic name of *the false prophet*, together with her bestial supporter, is said to be, at length, plunged alive into an infernal lake, burning with fire and brimstone.

I cannot but think it sufficiently clear, that the whole of this machinery is palpably diluvian ; and I believe it *to have been derived from that received imagery of the Patriarchal Church, which by a corrupted channel was admitted into Paganism.* It is impossible not to perceive that the woman standing upon the crescent is the very figure of the Samian Juno, or of the Egyptian Isis, who were represented in a precisely similar manner with reference to the lunar boat ; that the attack upon the woman and her offspring, by the deluging serpent, which is frustrated by the earth's absorption of the waters, is perfectly analogous to the attack of the diluvian serpent Python or Typhon upon Latona and Horus, which is similarly frustrated by the destruction of that monster ; and that the false Church, bearing the name of *Mystery*, floating on the mighty waters, or riding on a terrific beast, and ultimately plunged into the infernal lake, exhibits the very same aspect as the Great Mother of Paganism, sailing over the ocean, riding on her usual vehicle, the lion, venerated with certain appropriate Mysteries, and during the celebration of those Mysteries, plunged into the waters of a sacred lake, deemed the lake of Hades, I take it, that in the representation of the pure Church, *an ancient patriarchal scheme of symbolical machinery*, derived most plainly from the events of the Deluge, and borrowed with the usual perverse misapplication by the contrivers of Paganism, has been reclaimed to its proper use ; while, in the representation of the false Church, which, under a new name, revived the old Gentile demonolatry, the very imagery and language of the Gentile hierophants has, with singular propriety, been studiously adopted. (Rev. xii, xvii : 1-5, xix : 20.) I need scarcely remark that I am speaking solely of the apocalyptic *machinery* ; of this, the origin will still be the same, however we may interpret the prophecies which are built upon it. *The whole machinery*

of the *Apocalypse*, from beginning to end, seems to me, very plainly, to have been borrowed from the machinery of the ancient *Mysteries*: and this, if we consider the nature of the subject, was done with the very strictest attention to poetical decorum. St. John, himself, is made to personate an *aspirant* about to be initiated; and, accordingly, the images presented to his mind's eye closely resemble the pageants of the *Mysteries*, both in *their nature*, and in *order of succession*. The prophet first beholds a *door opened* in the magnificent temple of heaven; and into this he is invited to enter by the voice of one, who plays *the hierophant*. Here he witnesses the unsealing of a *sacred book*; and, forthwith he is appalled by a troup of *ghastly apparitions*, which flit in horrid succession before his eyes. Among these are pre-eminently conspicuous a *vast serpent*, the well-known symbol of the Great Father; and two portentous *wild beasts*, which severally come up out of the sea and out of the earth. Such hideous figures correspond with the canine phantoms of the Orgies, which seem to rise out of the ground, and with the polymorphic images of the principal hero god, who was universally deemed the offspring of the sea. Passing these terrific monsters in safety, the prophet, constantly attended by his angel-hierophant, who acts the part of an interpreter, is conducted into the presence of a *female*, who is described as closely resembling the Great Mother of Pagan Theology. Like Isis, emerging from the sea, and exhibiting herself to the eyes of the aspirant, Apuleius, this female divinity, upborne upon the marine wild beast, appears to float upon the surface of many waters. She is said to be an *open and systematical harlot*; just as the Great Mother was the declared female principle of fecundity; and as she was always propitiated by literal fornication reduced to a religious system, and as the initiated were made to drink a prepared liquor out of a sacred goblet, so this harlot is

represented as intoxicating the kings of the earth with the *golden cup* of her prostitution. On her forehead, the very name **MYSTERY** is inscribed; and the label teaches us that, in point of character, she is the *great universal mother* of idolatry. The nature of this Mystery the *officiating hierophant* undertakes to explain, and an important prophecy is most curiously and artfully veiled under the very language and imagery of the Orgies. To the sea-born Great Father was ascribed a three-fold state; he lived, he died, and he revived; and these changes of condition were duly exhibited in the Mysteries. To the sea-born wild beast is similarly ascribed a three-fold state; he lives, he dies, and he revives. While dead, he lies floating on the mighty ocean, just like Horus, or Osiris, Siva, or Vishnu; when he revives again, like those kindred deities, he emerges from the waves; and, whether dead or alive, he bears seven heads and ten horns, corresponding in number with the seven ark-preserved Rishis, and the ten aboriginal patriarchs. Nor is this all; as the worshippers of the Great Father bore his special mark or stigma, and were distinguished by his name, so the worshippers of the maritime beast equally bear his mark, and are equally designated by his appellation. At length, however, *the first or doleful part* of these sacred Mysteries draws to a close, and *the last or joyful part* is rapidly approaching. After the prophet has beheld the enemies of God plunged into a dreadful lake, or inundation of liquid fire, which corresponds with the infernal lake, or deluge of the Orgies, he is introduced into a *splendidly illuminated region*, expressly adorned with the characteristics of that *Paradise* which was the ultimate scope of the ancient aspirants; while, *without* the holy gate of admission, are the whole multitude of the profane, *dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth or maketh a lyē.*" (Fab. Pag. Idol., vol. iii, p. 640-643.

"HIRAM THE BUILDER. Among the workmen sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to Solomon, was one whom he styles 'a cunning man, endued with understanding,' and he is in another place described as 'a widow's son of the tribe of Naphthali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work in all works in brass.' This is the workman to whom Solomon was indebted for the construction of all the ornaments of the Temple. Hiram calls him *Huram abi*, that is, 'Hiram my father;' which is an evidence of his high standing at the Tyrian Court; for the title *ab*, or father, was among the Hebrews often bestowed as a title of honor and dignity, on the chief advisers and intimate friends of the king. Thus, Joseph, according to some commentators, is called *Abrech*, or the 'father of the king,' and this very Hiram is spoken of in Chronicles in the following words: *gnasah Huram Abif l'meleck Shlomo*, that is, 'did Hiram his father, make to King Solomon.' The name given to this architect in the lodge, is derived from this passage, *Huram abif*, meaning in Hebrew, Hiram his father.

"This Hiram, from his profession as an architect, and his birth as a Tyrian was, in all probability, acquainted with the Dionysian fraternity, which society had extended itself to Tyre, and if so, the union in his person of the Tyrian and Israelitish races, must have afforded him a favorable opportunity, as we have already suggested, of communicating the mysteries of that fraternity to the Jewish builders of the Temple."—*Lexicon*.

"WIDOW'S SON. One of the most illustrious personages in Masonic history is so called, because he is described in Scripture as having been 'the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali.'"—*Lexicon*.

“MASTER MASON. The third degree in all the different rites. In this, which is the perfection of symbolic or ancient craft masonry, the purest of truths are unveiled amid the most awful ceremonies. None but he who has visited the holy of holies, and traveled the *road of peril*, can have any conception of the mysteries unfolded in this degree. Its solemn observances diffuse a sacred awe, and inculcate a lesson of religious truth—and it is not until the neophyte has reached this summit of our ritual, that he can exclaim with joyful accents, in the language of the sage of old, ‘*Eureka, Eureka,*’ I have found at last the long-sought treasure. In the language of the learned and zealous Hutchinson, somewhat enlarged in its allusion, ‘the Master Mason represents a man under the doctrine of love, saved from the grave of iniquity, and raised to the faith of salvation. It testifies our faith in the resurrection of the body, and, while it inculcates a practical lesson of prudence and unshrinking fidelity, it inspires the most cheering hope of that final reward which belongs alone to the ‘just made perfect.’

“This was the last and highest of the three degrees in existence at the construction of the first temple, and it is, therefore, called ‘the perfection of ancient craft masonry.’ From the sublimity of the truths developed in it, and from the solemn nature of the ceremonies, it has received the appellation of the ‘sublime degree.’ From this degree alone can the officers of a lodge be chosen; and, though Fellow Crafts are permitted to speak, the privilege of voting is confined to Master Masons.”—*Lexicon*.

“ESOTERIC AND EXOTERIC MASONRY. From two Greek words signifying interior and exterior. The ancient philosophers, in the establishment of their respective sects, divided their schools into two kinds, *exoteric* and *esoteric*. In

the exoteric school, instruction was given in public places; the elements of science, physical and moral, were unfolded, and those principles which ordinary intelligence could grasp, and against which the prejudices of ordinary minds would not revolt, were inculcated in places accessible to all whom curiosity or a love of wisdom congregated. But the more abstruse tenets of their philosophy were reserved for a chosen few, who, united in an esoteric school, received, in the secret recesses of the master's dwelling, lessons too strange to be acknowledged, too pure to be appreciated, by the vulgar crowd, who, in the morning, had assembled at the public lecture.

"Thus, in some measure, is it with masonry. Its system, taken as a whole, is, it is true, strictly esoteric in its construction. Its disciples are taught a knowledge which is forbidden to the profane, and it is only in the adytum of the lodge that these lessons are bestowed; and yet, viewed in itself and unconnected with the world without, masonry contains within its bosom an exoteric and esoteric school, as palpably divided as were those of the ancient sects, with this simple difference, that the admission or the exclusion was in the latter case involuntary, and dependent solely on the will of the instructor, while in the former it is voluntary, and dependent only on the will and the wishes of the disciple. In the sense in which I wish to convey the terms, every Mason, on his initiation, is exoteric—he beholds before him a beautiful fabric, the exterior of which, alone, he has examined, and with this examination he may, possibly, remain satisfied—many, alas! too many, are. If so, he will remain an Exoteric Mason. But there are others, whose curiosity is not so easily gratified—they desire a further and more intimate knowledge of the structure than has been presented to their view—they enter and examine its internal form—they traverse its intricate passages, they explore its hidden recesses, and admire and

contemplate its magnificent apartments—their knowledge of the edifice is thus enlarged, and with more extensive, they have purer, views of the principles of its construction, than have fallen to the lot of their less enquiring brethren. These men become Esoteric Masons. The hidden things of the order are, to them familiar as household words,—they constitute the Masters in Israel, who are to guide and instruct the less informed—and to diffuse light over paths which, to all others, are obscure and dark.

“There is between these studious Masons, and their slothful unenquiring brethren, the same difference in the views they take of Masonry, as there is between an artist and a peasant in their respective estimation of an old painting—it may be of a Raphael or a Reubens. The peasant gazes with stupid wonder or with cold indifference, on the canvass redolent with life, without the excitation of a single emotion in his barren soul. Its colors mellowed to a rich softness, by the hand of time, are to him less pleasing than the gaudy tints which glare upon the sign of his village inn; and its subject, borrowed from the deep lore of history, or the bold imaginings of poesy, are less intelligible to him, than the daubed print which hangs conspicuously at his cottage fireside. And he is amazed to see this paltry piece of canvass bought with the treasures of wealth, and guarded with a care that the brightest jewel would demand in vain.

“But to the eye of the artist, how different the impression conveyed! To him, everything beams with light, and life, and beauty. To him, it is the voice of nature, speaking in the language of art. Prometheus-like, he sees the warm blood gushing through the blue veins, and the eye beaming with a fancied animation—the correctness of its outlines—the boldness of its fore-shortenings, where the limbs appear ready to burst from the canvass,—the delicacy of its shadows, and the fine arrangement of its lights, are all before him, subjects of

admiration, on which he could forever gaze, and examples of instruction which he would fain imitate.

"And whence arises this difference of impression, produced by the same object on two different individuals? It is not from genius alone, for that, unaided, brings no light to the mind, though it prepares it for its reception. It is cultivation which enlarges the intellect, and fits it as a matrix for the birth of those truths which find in the bosom of ignorance no abiding place.

"And thus it is with masonry. As we cultivate it as a science its objects become extended—as our knowledge of it increases, new lights burst forth from its inmost recess, which to the inquisitive Mason, burn with bright effulgence; but to the inattentive and unsearching, are but as dim and fitful glimmerings, only rendering 'darkness visible.'

"Let every Mason ask himself, if he be of the esoteric or the exoteric school of masonry. Has he studied its hidden beauties and excellencies? Has he explored its history, and traced out the origin and the erudite meaning of its symbols? Or has he supinely rested content with the knowledge he received at the pedestal, nor sought to pass beyond the porch of the Temple? If so, he is not prepared to find in our royal art those lessons which adorn the path of life, and cheer the bed of death; and, for all purposes, except those of social meeting, and friendly recognition, masonry is to him a sealed book.

"But, if he has ever felt a desire to seek and cultivate the internal philosophy of masonry, let him advance in those rarely trodden paths; the labor of such a pursuit is itself refreshment, and the reward great. Fresh flowers bloom at every step; and the prospect on every side is so filled with beauty and enchantment, that, ravished at the sight, he will rush on with enthusiasm from fact to fact, and from truth to truth, until the whole science of masonry lies before him invested with a new form and sublimity."—*Lexicon*.

REMARKS.

With respect to the above extracts from the writings of two distinguished Masonic Lecturers, I have but little to say, my purpose being accomplished by merely reciting them. The general reader, I doubt not, will thank me for calling his attention to works so deeply interesting. Their importance is by no means confined to the circle of initiates. While not a Mason myself, I have nevertheless consulted Masonic books, and that, too, very carefully; though from no disposition to pry into forbidden secrets. I have long been convinced that no mere ceremony can, of itself, communicate positive knowledge; and much less can we suppose that an oral *word* of any number of syllables, can convey into the soul of man a knowledge of the ineffable One. This, together with an instinctive aversion to coming under artificial obligations of every sort, especially those imposing secrecy in regard to important knowledge, has hitherto restrained me from presuming to offer myself as a candidate for admission into a

Lodge. I wish to be the judge, myself, as to the propriety of speaking or remaining silent with respect to any point of knowledge I may fancy myself in possession of. Nevertheless, as masonic books are public, I have consulted them, as I would read other works for such information as I might glean from them.

In reading this class of books, I have, first, observed the *subjects* upon which Masons lecture. These are easily seen. I have, next, noticed such points as have been especially insisted upon, though often obscurely alluded to; and, lastly, I have observed the places in which *opinions* have been given; by which, sometimes, more is intimated than is expressed: the result being a general impression as to the objects of Masonry, to which I have no desire to add anything from personal observation of ceremonies practiced, or doctrines inculcated, within the walls of a building. We may see, very plainly, that the true lodge answers to Solomon's Temple, and that this is not a building "made with hands." We are told, also, in sufficiently plain language, the proper object of study to a Mason, in what is said of the Name of God and of Truth; and that one of the principal ends aimed at, is a sublime morality, by which all of the members of the fraternity are theoretically joined in a perfect brotherhood. No one can object to this purpose or proposed end; but,

besides that I am averse to coming under artificial obligations, I would prefer, if possible, to realize a sense of unity with the race, rather than to restrict my regards to a separate circle. Benevolence seems to lose its character, when it is administered through the forms of a benevolent mutual insurance society.

As to the particular "impressive ceremony" by which, as Dr. Mackey says, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is inculcated in the "Master's Degree," I have only this to say, that the tenet in question cannot be taught by any mere mimetic ceremony; and, as to the mode and manner of the ceremony, that cannot be important. It may be a seeming murder, and a no less seeming resurrection; or it may be *the violent death of some unhappy individual, whose body is affected to have been lost; much time being expended and many ceremonies used in a search after the body*, or some other assimilated ceremony.

The ceremony itself may vary in Lodges of different degrees, as Dr. Oliver tells us the positions of the square and compasses vary in the different degrees, (Symbol of Glory, p. 177.)

This important ceremony is no doubt accurately described for some one of the degrees, by Swedenborg, in paragraph 335 of his (Masonic?) work on Heaven

and Hell: and, again, paragraphs 447 to 450 of the same work, are possibly illustrative of some higher degree.

I am confident that the following passage, when written, had its type in a Masonic Lodge, Swedenborg considering candidates for admission into a Lodge as "infants," because, in regeneration the life is supposed to begin anew, the Spirit being renewed, or supposed to be so, in the act of initiation.

Par. 335. "Infants are instructed principally by representatives suited to their capacities, which in beauty, and fullness of wisdom derived from an interior ground, exceed all belief. Thus intelligence, which derives its soul from good, is insinuated into them by degrees. From two representatives, which it was granted me to see, a conclusion may be formed with regard to the rest. The angelic teachers first represented the Lord rising from the sepulchre, and at the same time the union of His Human with the Divine, and this they effected in a manner so wise as to exceed all human wisdom, but yet in an innocent infantile manner. They also presented the idea of a sepulchre, but not at the same time the idea of the Lord, except so remotely that it was scarcely perceived to be the Lord; because in the idea of a sepulchre there is something dismal or funereal, which was thus removed.

Afterwards they cautiously admitted into the sepulchre something atmospherical, which appeared like a thin watery principle, by which they represented spiritual life in baptism, and this again with a decent removal of every thing unbecoming. Afterwards I saw them represent the Lord's descent to those who were in prison, and His ascent with them into heaven, which was done with incomparable prudence and piety, [sinners are said to be in prison, whom the Spirit of Truth is represented as liberating.] One trait was peculiarly infantile. They let down small cords very soft and tender, and almost invisible, by which they assisted the Lord in his ascent; whilst a holy fear possessed them, lest any part of the representative should border upon any thing destitute of a spiritual celestial principle. Not to mention other representatives in use among them, by which, as by sports suited to the minds of infants, they are brought into the knowledge of truth and the affections of good."—*Heaven and Hell*.

Dr. Oliver, in referring to the Third Degree, in his Theocratic Philosophy of Free Masonry, page 328, calls it "a sublime degree, for (says he) it contains the essence of Purity and Light;" and then he adds,—
"This Degree has a reference to the Christian dispen-

sation, by which the day of salvation is more fully revealed; atonement is made for sin; and the Resurrection from the dead is plainly communicated and confirmed by the resurrection of CHRIST from the grave."

Dr. Oliver here, without designing to disclose any secret of Masonry, tells us very plainly, nevertheless, *what* is done in a Masonic Lodge to teach the doctrine of the resurrection; and Swedenborg tells us, substantially, *how* it is done: for, that both refer to a common ceremony, there cannot be a doubt.

It is not the fault of those who are "without," that the mystagogues do not agree among themselves about their own traditions. Dr. Ashe is another highly respected and authorized writer on Masonry, as sufficiently appears by the re-publication of his *Masonic Manual* by Dr. Oliver, and yet he thinks it necessary to make the following remark:—"The ceremonies of Masons prove that the testimonials and insignia of the Master's order, in the present state of Masonry [without doubt referring to the identical ceremony described by Swedenborg] were devised within the ages of Christianity; and we are confident there are not any records in being, in any nation, or in any language, which can show them to be pertinent to any other system, or give them greater antiquity," p. 146.

Dr. Oliver cannot agree with this, and shows his large faith in the antiquity of the *legend*, by the following note upon this passage, in which the extraordinary opinion of "Bro. Sir W. Drummond" is glanced at, and we are distinctly informed that Hutchinson, another great name in Masonry, treats the legend as an allegory!

"If Dr. Ashe refers in the above passage to the legend of the third degree, I think his conclusion is erroneous. I agree with the ingenious author that the present system of Free Masonry is essentially Christian; and not the less so because it commences with the Jews: for Judaism, in all its references, was only a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, *Gal.* iii: 24. But I am persuaded that the original version of that legend was used in the very earliest times—even before the Flood—as a memorial of the resurrection, and a *type* of Christ. It was known both to the patriarchs, Jews and idolaters; was referred to by Jesus Christ and his Apostles; and is allegorized in the parable of the moral death and restoration of the prodigal son, who, it is there said, "was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found."* The idolaters

* We may see, by the language of Christ in this parable, what is to be understood by the *dead* in the gospels. In like manner St. Paul speaks of those who were *dead* in trespasses and sins. These are the *dead* that are raised, by the Spirit of Truth to a life of Truth. I see

exemplified the legend, and it was referred by them to the setting and rising of their chief deity, the sun; although some referred it to the sowing and sprouting of corn. I cannot enter more fully on this mysterious subject; but the fraternity will understand my meaning. I may, however, add—as it forms the theme of an existing document from the pen of Bro. Sir W. Drummond, author of the *Origines*, which is to be seen in the archives of the Royal Arch Chapter at Edinburgh, No. 1—that this eminent person interprets our legend *astronomically*. And though I differ widely from the theory, I must confess that the arguments are very ingenious, and the coincidences extraordinary. Hutchinson treats it as an allegory; while I am persuaded it is commemorative of an actual fact which occurred in the earliest age of the world.”

We all know the proverb—when Doctors disagree, &c.

Swedenborg died at London in 1772, less than one hundred years since; and, now, in the middle of this nineteenth century, notwithstanding the art of printing and the boasted light of the time, we see that tradition has been at her usual work with his honored name,

no reason for refusing a plain simple meaning for one wholly incomprehensible, of which we never see any counterpart.

having thrown around it a number of the most *authentic* stories (for so they are considered by many) by which he is believed to have possessed supernatural powers; and a Church is rapidly growing up, founded confessedly upon "faith" in those powers, by which his doctrines and teachings are received as divine. Cannot this state of things instruct us as to the probabilities connected with the "Legends" of former ages, when printing was unknown, and science scarcely had a name? But I would have no one imagine that I am wanting in respect for the memory of the great Swedish philosopher. His writings are worthy of the profoundest study of every lover of the Truth; but they should be read under the discipline of the closing paragraph of his work on Heaven and Hell.

It is useless to deny that Swedenborg was a Mason, and that his oath of secrecy was one of the causes of his mystical mode of writing. What Swedenborg saw under the influence of his studies and contemplations, in and through Masonry in its higher degrees, he chose to write about as if seen in another world, his oath of secrecy forbidding him to write openly.

The Mystery of Masonry is the mystery of Swedenborg. The "Temple" referred to in paragraph 223, Heaven and Hell, is a Masonic Lodge; and the

"preacher," there referred to, is either the presiding officer, who occupies the "seat of wisdom," (see the Preface to Dr. Mackey's Lexicon,) or some Lecturer duly appointed by the Grand Master. I have seen it stated somewhere, that the position of the auditory, as described in this paragraph, is that of the members of the order of the *Knights of the Red Cross*, that of a circle, during a lecture.

In some of Swedenborg's works, (*Heaven and Hell—Divine Love and Divine Wisdom*), we read much of what he calls QUARTERS, *East, South, West and North*, which has its explanation in a Masonic Lodge only. Masons who desire to pass from the Exoteric to the Esoteric class, would do well to study the Swedish Mystic. Truth, says Dr. Mackey, is the proper study of a Mason. But Truth, in itself, has no adjective before it: it is not Masonic, and yet may be studied in a Lodge, as also in the writings of Masons, the student being careful never to lose sight of the true Lodge.

Masonic writers, Dr. Ashe and others, have much to say in defense of the secrecy imposed upon the members of the fraternity. I confess I have not been convinced of the propriety of it by anything I have read on the subject. They appeal to the secrecy of Diplomats, to the oath of secrecy taken by members

of courts martial, &c.; but the fact that no exceptions are ever taken to this sort of secrecy shows that a distinction is seen by every one between the oath of a member of a court martial and that of a Mason. We all understand the reason for the one. Masons, however, not only take an oath of secrecy, the reasons for which are unknown to the public, where treason therefore may be suspected, but it is understood that they swear to secrecy before any secret is communicated to them. By this process they assume an obligation, the nature of which they do not know themselves until it is too late to withdraw. All that can then be done is to abstain from attendance upon the Lodge,—the resort of the late Henry Clay, who wrote a letter in the latter period of his life, in which he said that for thirty years he had not been inside of a Lodge. John Quincy Adams published a letter recommending the abolition of the O. B. of a Mason, which was all that was necessary, in his opinion, to put an end to the system. The O. B. is simply the oath of a Brother. When such men as John Quincy Adams are willing, after initiation, that Masonry should die, others who are not initiated must be excused for supposing that the day of usefulness for such an institution has passed, especially where the public voice can be heard in the government. Besides, those who are “without,”

may well find it difficult to understand the charity which encloses itself in a charmed circle, and contumeliously looks upon the non-elect as dogs and swine. If the latter class are unfortunate in their ignorance, is it altogether right to mystify them still further, by mysterious books purporting to come from another world? With all my respect for the memory of Swedenborg I feel uncomfortable towards him when I think of his reported visions into the spiritual world, which have already become one of the prominent delusions of the age. Would it not be better for every man who has a thought, to speak it out openly, and then let the sun of truth shine upon it and determine its character? Masons recommend innocence, truth, candor, and brotherly love. These are very beautiful virtues, too beautiful to be cultivated exclusively in hot houses, where they must lose some of their fragrance.

The student of Masonry will readily see, by the above extracts, that Masons themselves are apparently anxious to show a similitude of ceremony between the spurious and the genuine Free Masonry, the ancient and the modern Esoteric societies, and that in this they have evidently succeeded. It is indisputable, that the important ceremony in the Master's Degree, however much it may vary in some of its details, must

be similar to that in use formerly among the ancients, by which the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was taught. The only point of difference lies in the nature and character of the **LEGEND** at the root of the ceremony. Dr. Oliver claims, in behalf of Masonry, a genuine Legend, a Legend founded upon truth, dating it in the earliest ages of the world, or, in another passage, referring to this subject, before the flood; whilst the story of the flood itself is called by Philo an allegory. Dr. Mackey seems to think that the Masonic Legend dates from the building of the Temple, while Dr. Ashe sees in the testimonials and insignia of the Third Degree so strong a likeness to what is peculiar to Christianity, as to be very positive in the opinion that "there are not any records in being, in any nation, or in any language, which can show them to be pertinent to any other system, or give them greater antiquity." It should be stated, as a matter of fairness, that Dr. Oliver attributes the ceremony among the ancients, to an originally divine source, affirming that it was corrupted in the spurious societies, but preserved among the Essenes to the advent of Christ, which he regards as the fulfillment of prior types. But this assumption of a specially divine original is a mere after-thought, or mode of accounting for a ceremony among the spurious sects, the existence of

which, but for such an explanation, would seem to furnish an original for the ceremony in the Master's Degree without supposing a supernatural cause; for it is certain that the ancients did not copy from the moderns.

A certain ceremony, for the purpose of teaching a particular doctrine, is found to have been in existence among all ancient (spurious) Masonic societies, and is now made use of in Masonry, according to several accredited Masonic writers, for the purpose of teaching the same doctrine. How can it be thought strange, that in the course of time this ceremony should have appeared in a written form, though in a mysterious record, whose actual history must be referred to the Essenes? This ceremony has in fact actually been described, though in a mysterious manner also, almost under our very eyes, by Baron Swedenborg; for I cannot allow myself to doubt the connection of Swedenborg with the Masonic fraternity. As an additional proof of this I would appeal to the *Corollary* of Hutchinson, where, after reciting the principal heads of the Christian creed, including the scene of the resurrection, he expressly adds that, "In the Master's order this whole doctrine is symbolized, and the christian conduct is by types presented to us.

The "unhappy event at the Temple," commemorated

in the Master's Degree, is the type of a tragedy enacted at a later period; and the explanation of one would no doubt prove to be an explanation of the other, without either of them being historical. When Swedenborg assures us that he had seen the Lord in person, giving us the very date, he means no more than that, on that particular date, his "interior" perception of the Truth had culminated in that opinion which was, to him, the corner stone of his whole creed, that GOD is a MAN. We must read Swedenborg's writings by the rule of correspondence,—his own rule for reading the Scriptures themselves,—which means that we must seek the spirit of the letter. This is a conceivable view, at all events; whereas, if it be supposed that a bodily person was intended by Swedenborg, then we would ask how he could know the person of the Lord from any other person, since no one of the Evangelists or Apostles has given us the remotest description of his person. Not a single trait of his personal appearance has been recorded, simply because, for the purposes of the gospel writers, the person was wholly absorbed in the personification.

There is in the world a distinct class of books, written "within and without," *Ezek.* ii: 10; or "within and on the back side," *Rev.* v: 1; that is, they are

symbolic books, having a double sense; and they have proceeded from the members of Esoteric societies in different ages of the world, who have written under the restraint of an oath of secrecy. What is the true key to these books? It is a state of the soul, and is not a transferable possession. "In thy light shall we see light." *Psalm xxxvi*: 9.

It is but just and proper to say that Dr. Oliver is a christian divine; and that in many places, in his various works, he insists strongly upon there being a perfect harmony between Masonry and Christianity. In some places, he says that Masonry is Christianity; in others he asserts the harmony of the two: in one passage he would seem to give Masonry the highest place of the two, where he says:—"It is true that Masonry is not confined exclusively to Christianity, but embraces all that is great and good in every religion under the sun, because it confines its excitements to the practice of morality, whatever the system of faith may be; because it is an institution of charity or brotherly love, and is not, consequently, a system of faith, but of practice; but it does not embrace, or lend the most indirect sanction to, any religious institution which diverges in the smallest degree, from the systematic worship of

one God, the Creator and Governor of the world.”—*Antiquities of Free Masonry*, p. 167.

In another passage the Lecturer says, speaking of Divine Love, “that the T. G. A. O. T. U. himself taught it as it was never understood before; and by his instructions Masonry became a universal science.”

Here the founder of Christianity is appealed to as having made Masonry a universal science, for these mysterious letters mean the “Word” of St. John, *Symbol of Glory*, p. 86.

Certainly, nothing can exceed the devotion of Dr. Oliver to Masonry. One of the preceding passages would indicate his opinion that it is even something beyond Christianity. It possesses all that is good in Christianity, and the good of all other religions besides; and is, moreover, a system of “practice,” and “not of faith;” as if Christianity were a system of faith only. In another place, Dr. Oliver,—determined to assert the highest position possible for his favorite art,—says that, “Masonry *originated* with God; (and) like that eternal Being, it existed before time was, and shall exist when time shall be no more.” *Antiq. of M.*, p. 93. The author of the fourth gospel has hardly said anything more of the Word, and possibly the two writers intended to set forth a common idea.

The real nature of the antiquity of Masonry is un

doubtedly expressed by Hutchinson in his fourteenth Lecture: "Our antiquity, says he, is in our principles, maxims, language, learning, and religion." A principle, rightly conceived, is conceived as eternal; and, therefore, to conceive anything in its principles is to conceive it as eternal. Religion itself, so conceived, is seen to be eternal, and this is the Word, as conceived from this point of view. In this sense, the Scriptures are eternal; that is, they express eternal principles. To perceive these principles and their harmony, is to perceive the true unity; and yet this is not anything that ever has been or ever can be expressed by an image, except, as the Masons say, that every thing in the universe is a symbol of it. But this is understood only by Esoteric Masons, who are not merely initiated in the forms of Masonry, but baptized in the Spirit of it. The eternal "language" of Masonry can only be the universal language of nature expressed in smiles, tears, frowns, &c.

Dr. Oliver not only assumes, with Dr. Mackey, that the Sacred Scriptures are the records of Masonry, but he familiarly writes of MOSES as a *Mason*; as also of NOAH, ENOCH, and other remarkable worthies of Scripture history: they were all Masons, according to Dr. Oliver. He expressly calls David a Grand Master, and Solomon is also called a Grand Master:

St. Paul is a "Worthy Brother." Aaron's priestly robe, represented the universe; the description by *Josephus* being recited at length; and, indeed, the description is sufficiently remarkable, and may serve as an apology for those who have seen in the system some astronomic allusions to the sun and the moon, and to the *twelve* signs of the zodiac; to the seven planets; to the four elements, earth, water, air and fire, &c., the whole being representative of Nature as formerly understood.

"In a Mason's Lodge (says Dr. Oliver) everything which the candidate sees before his eyes, possesses a symbolical meaning to recommend the practice of virtue in order to produce the glory of God, peace on earth, and good will towards men; a result which is acceptable to T. G. A. O. T. U, because it cannot fail to prove a source of happiness to his creatures, and lead to an abundant reward in the mansions of the blessed." (*Symbol of Glory*, p. 117.)

Masons appear to use words, for purposes of instruction, composed of the initial letters of sentences; and these they feel at liberty to publish, as being known only to the initiated. A word of this kind was formerly used to signify NATURE, which was made by the initial letters of four Hebrew words expressing the supposed four elements of nature, fire, air, water,

and earth, nature being the real Tabernacle, the real Temple, the real Masonic Lodge; which again is expressed by the letters T. G. A. O. T. U., which means simply *the great author of the universe*; the work being inseparable from its author; and a great effort is made to show that these mysterious letters, T. G. A. O. T. U., mean the WORD, of St. John, which was with God, and was God, by whom all things were made.

The letters H. A. B., undoubtedly mean Hiram Abiff, who represents the principle of Beauty in the Masonic Trinity of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty; and it is H. A. B. that supplies, by the "unhappy event" at the Temple, the "Legend" for the Master's Degree; and this was but illustrated at a later period in the form of biography, originating among the ancient Masons under the name of the Essenes.

Among other instructions given to a candidate is one—to *part with his life rather than part with his honor*;—and this is printed in italics. But by the word *honor* here, we must understand something infinitely more profound than can be seen in a fashionable exposition of the meaning of the word. Now the "unhappy event at the Temple," spoken of by Masonic Lecturers, teaches, among other things, this very doctrine. Everything seen in a Lodge is symbolic, says Dr.

Oliver. What then is the symbolism of H. A. B. being put to death upon refusing to surrender his secret, (the secret of Masonry) but this, that a true Mason must yield his life, rather than violate his sense of DUTY? No doubt a Mason is under the heaviest obligations to keep his oath of secrecy inviolate. But this is itself a symbolism, which signifies that he is to maintain his fidelity, that is, his "honor." Fidelity is the very secret of a true life, which must on no account be surrendered to any power in the universe: and this is the doctrine of the gospel: "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," *Luke* xiv: 26, the meaning of which is precisely the great lesson of Masonry; to wit, that DUTY, (fidelity and righteousness,) is more important than parents and friends, yea, even than life itself.

Dr. Oliver claims especially a connection of Masonry with St. John the Evangelist, to whom, it seems, Masonic Lodges are dedicated, *Antiq. of M.*, p. 165. The Doctor even refers to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians as "a truly Masonic Address;" and I confess I have looked in vain in St. Paul's Epistles for a clear statement of what in *Rom.* x: 8, he calls the "faith" he preached, and which in other places he calls

the MYSTERY that had been hid from the beginning of the world,

In view of all these allusions to the mysteries of Masonry, and especially to the mystery of the Master's Degree, the Third Degree, one is strongly tempted to think that St. Paul was himself a Mason, and that his being caught up into the Third Heaven, for he is evidently speaking of himself in his allusion to this, where he heard unspeakable words, which it was not lawful for a man to utter, is, after all, no more than a reference to an ancient Masonic mystery. If this is not the explanation of this passage in St. Paul's life, then, how is it to be understood? To say that it is a miracle is not to explain it, but to put it beyond the possibility of being explained. In this last case, we are called upon to believe, often on the ground that we believe many things we do not understand; and so, why not this? We are told that we believe that grass grows, but cannot explain the manner of it. But there is a wide difference in the cases. We see grass growing; but no one of us sees St. Paul in the Third Heaven!

That the "mystery" or "faith" preached by St. Paul was the "Word" of St. John, there is no doubt; and that the "lost Word," which the Masons claim to be in possession of, has reference to the same Word,

there can be as little doubt. A Word is mysteriously communicated in one of the degrees of Masonry; but it is a mistake to suppose that the stone, with the new name written upon it, can be externally transferred by any such means. No intelligent Mason believes in the possibility of this: if others do believe it, they must naturally be classed with those whom *Dr. Mackey* calls "exoteric" Masons, who make no progress in Masonry, (or the knowledge of nature,) beyond the threshold, even with all the assistance which the ceremonies of initiation can give. This was well understood by Hutchinson, undoubtedly one of the best writers on Masonry, where, speaking of signs and tokens used in the mystery, he says:—"the light [truth?] which had possessed the soul, and which was the first principle, was in no wise to be distinguished by such signs and tokens, or revealed, expressed, or communicated thereby." *Spirit of Masonry*, p. 141.

Now this "light" in Masonry, is identical with the true light of Christianity; but cannot be seen to be so, when clouded in either case with forms, and ceremonies, and writings, unless these are seen to be the mere garments of the Spirit. This Light (in the soul) is represented, in a Lodge, according to Hutchinson, by an emblem which he calls an emblem of "prudence;" the characteristics of which, as he enu-

merates or defines them, can only apply to a purified conscience. He applies the emblem also to what he calls its religious import, to wit, the Star which led the wise men to Bethlehem: *Spirit of Masonry, Lecture V.* What does this signify, but that the Star in the East is itself emblematic of a principle of truth in the soul which, faithfully followed, will lead it to the Son of the Virgin; and this, rightly understood, is no other than itself seen in its exaltation. Hutchinson refers to it in this language: "It has been pointed out to you, that the furnitures of the lodge are emblems excitiv of morality and good government: prudence shines in the center; or if you would apply this object to more sacred principles, it represents the blazing star which conducted the wise men to Bethlehem, and proclaimed the presence of the Son of God." This *star* in the Gospel is simply a symbol of the principle of Truth in the soul, which is followed by the wise, in simplicity, until it proclaims the *presence* of the divine. It is said to have risen in the east, because the sun rises in the east, and is itself, as light, the symbol of truth. This *star* is only another reference to the *Angel* speaking in God's name; and the *Prophet*, rising in the midst of his brethren like unto Moses: and it is the *treasure* hid in a field; and the *grain* of mustard seed, &c.

Dr. Oliver's labors to demonstrate the connection of Masonry and Christianity, (in his *Antiq. of M.*,) brought upon him some censures from the brethren, as appears by his subsequent works, the *Star in the East*, and *The Insignia of the Royal Arch*; in both of which he defends his position, against his censurers, though he writes under great disadvantages, because he cannot write openly. But it is plain, that Dr. Oliver considers the secret of Masonry to be the Corner Stone in Zion; the Word, of St. John, without whom was not anything made that was made; "even T. G. A. O. T. U.," *Insignia, second letter*, p. 3.

The point in this discussion seems to be, that Masonry has two sides to it, speculative and operative, the latter only, having a date, though a disputed one, Dr. Mackey referring it to the building of the Temple. Speculative Masonry is claimed to be coeval with the universe, or, as Dr. Oliver expresses it—it *originated* with God. In like manner, Christianity has a spiritual and a historical side; the first being the WORD, which was with God in the beginning, and was God; the latter being referred to the days of Tiberius. Now, the secret of Masonry, on its speculative side, must be also the secret of Christianity on its spiritual side, whatever this secret be, on the simple consideration that there can be but one T. G. A. O. T. U., and this,

I say, is often better known by a simple heart, than by all the learning in the world: and it can no more be *infused* into any one by a ceremony in **Masonry**, than by a ceremony in the Church; and yet in either case appropriate ceremonies may be instrumentally useful.

That Dr. Oliver is a learned man, there is no doubt; but he is hopelessly involved in the externals of his art, the meaning of which he does not see so clearly as Dr. Mackey, who modestly professes to depend upon him for much information. He evidently sees **Masonry** in the "flesh," and attaches undue importance to its signs and symbols,—as if these could be of any worth in themselves!

A true Mason is simply a true man, whose Lodge is universal nature, where everything seen is symbolic of something unseen. Whatever is symbolic in the institution called a Lodge, is so, only as being an imitation of the true Lodge, and this is a building not made with hands, the construction of which, as Dr. Mackey says of **Masonry**, is truly Esoteric.

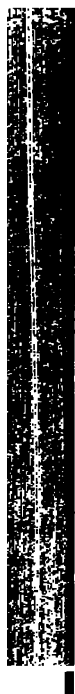
As I am not a Mason, no member of the fraternity need take offence at the preceding remarks. They have been made in a spirit of inquiry only, and not of opposition to a system which, it is evident, engages the affections of some of the best members of society.

I only say, for myself, that I wuld rather forego the advantages of the institution, whatever they are, than acquire them by entering into an artificial obligation of secresy, even though it should turn out that the secresy extends only to matters about which, in the general intercourse of the world, there is no disposition to be communicative. So far as the secret is supposed to relate to the mystery of life, we may all know, without a ceremony of initiation, that this cannot be taught by any ceremony whatever, and there is no danger of its ever being improperly communicated. So far as the instructions and teachings within a lodge may tend to the preservation of the moral decencies and proprieties of life, certainly no one can object to them; and that something of this kind is included in the instructions we may very well suppose, by the repeated allusions to emblems of innocence and purity to be met with, even in the published lectures, the design of which, on the whole, can be no other than what is included in the open teachings of the Church; Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Before allowing this volume to pass irrecoverably from my control, I desire to say that it has not been written for the purpose of infusing doubts into the mind of any one with regard to religious verity—the most important subject undoubtedly that can occupy the attention of any human being. I would respect the faith of every one, no matter how literal; but because I know, and am absolutely certain, that there is now a large and increasing class of readers who are displeased with a literal sense of the Scriptures, and whose attention has perhaps never been called to any other, I not only feel excused for writing this work, but even venture to hope that it may be of some service. I believe, with Origen and many others of the Fathers of the Church, that “the Scriptures are of but little use to those who understand them as they are written.” But I believe also that there is an underlying sense, which is the spirit of the Scriptures, the possession of which is of immeasurable importance. I would have no one imagine, therefore, that the sacred books are to be undervalued from any thing I have written in this volume. I would say to every one; read and understand what St. Paul meant when he said that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life; and, again, what Christ meant, who said the same thing in symbolism, comparing the letter to

flesh. The same teacher meant the very same thing when he said that the water of Jacob's well did not quench the thirst for truth, but that it was necessary to drink of the water that he, the Spirit, gave, which is said to be a never-failing fountain to those who find it. This is the teaching of Christ, and the writer of this volume has proposed no other. The warning to Nicodemus is a warning to every one of us; but if we read even this warning itself, and confine ourselves to the letter only, we are in danger of missing the spirit, that is, the truth of it; for the rule of interpretation which St. Paul himself applied to the Old Testament we are called upon, by the word of Truth, to apply to the sacred volume as a whole; for to us, the whole is so much letter, whose spirit is Christ, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, which, being first in the seeker, shall lead its possessor into all truth, recalling the teachings of Jesus and verifying them by the "witness of the Spirit."

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